

FATHERS AND SONS.

BY

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NEW EDITION.

LONDON

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS,

THE BROADWAY, LUDGATE.

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CHAPTER I.

"WELL, I declare, I don't see why not," said Colonel Bruff.

"I don't," replied Sir George Grindle.

"She is a good girl, and a pretty girl," said the colonel, "although I say it that should n't."

"And my son George is a perfect lady's man," replied Sir George.

"That'll do," said the colonel.

"A bit of a dandy I admit," continued the baronet; "and never the worse for that: better be a dandy than like his half-brother Frank, who, with all his mawkish sentimentality, can't say boh to a goose."

"Half-brother?" interrupted the colonel. "What have you"—

"Yes, I have," said Sir George. "I have been twice married—a circumstance I thought you were aware of. I married for money when I was young, and for love when I was older—eh?"

"That'll do. That'll do," said the colonel. "And how did you find it answer?"

"First the best," said Sir George. "My first wife was—"

"Oh, every body knows," interrupted the colonel, "the rich Miss Simpkins—the great heiress—the—"

"Exactly so," said the baronet, "Good soul—amiable, kind, and all that, eh? She died soon after George was born. Still, *entre nous*, I never cared for *her*, nor she for me. I wanted her money, she wanted to be 'my lady.'—All done by friends. So, don't you see, colonel, having married her to please my family,—why, when she popped off the perch, I married my next to please myself—eh? I speak plainly—truth between friends—at's the fact."

"That'll do. That'll do," said the colonel.

"Poor dear," continued Sir George, "she died in three years after Frank was born—this younger son of mine."

"That, I never heard," said Colonel Bruff.

"Ay, I dare say," replied Sir George, "you were abroad fighting our country's battles."

"That'll do. That'll do," said Bruff, "you've hit it, no doubt; and the boys take after their mothers?"

"Thereabouts," answered Sir George; "the eldest one—you must have seen him about town—a deucedly good-looking fellow—was in a crack cavalry regiment, just getting his troop, when they were ordered to India. George went to his doctor—discovered he had a touch of the liver—could n't go—"

"That'll do," said the colonel. "Wanted to be a liver at home, eh?—Gad, that's not so bad—so I suppose exchanged—"

"No," said Sir George, "not that; sold out—retired altogether—full of domestic feelings and love of country."

"That'll do," said the colonel, who seemed exceedingly well pleased to establish a connexion for his daughter with the *eldest* son of a wealthy baronet—the title having of course its weight, for as much, at least, as it was worth.

But there was a stronger reason for this anxiety in Colonel Bruff's case than might have occurred in many others. The colonel had a housekeeper—a most equivocal head to his establishment—who appeared to manage all his affairs with the unhesitating decision of a mistress rather than a servant: and his consciousness of the extraordinary influence which this functionary possessed, induced him to keep his daughter Jane as much as possible engaged at the country-houses of his different friends, so that she might be preserved from coming too much in contact with Mrs. Smylar (so was the lady-lieutenant of the house in Harley-street, where the gallant and disagreeable colonel resided, named); and accordingly Jane, the pretty, the dear Jane, was, in order to ensure the comforts of domestic life, kept away from home as long in fact as there was any body of her father's acquaintance in the country to receive or keep her.

In consequence of this arrangement, the colonel's house in Harley-street could scarcely be considered *montée*, except for a short period of the year, during which its gallant owner held it necessary to give a certain round of dinners, and afford the gentle Jane an opportunity of seeing a little of society, and of doing the honours at one or two assemblies, interspersed and illustrated with harmony, vocal and instrumental, imported for the occasion from the Italian Opera-house.

This being the case, the colonel, in what is called the dead time of the year, dined regularly and invariably at one of the clubs to which he belonged; and, as sure as seven o'clock came, marched up the coffee-room, with his rosy countenance, erect, in a masculine and military manner, to his own favourite table; whereupon it was his custom to make as serious an impression upon the "passing" joint, as it had been in the earlier part of his life his pride and glory to make upon an advancing column of the enemy. The gallant officer had an appetite, and his use

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of small arms in his attacks upon the haunches, and saddles and sirloins, has often excited the envy of surrounding guests and the painful anxiety of those who were to come after him, to the *pièce de résistance*.

For such a Castor, where could a fitter Pollux be found than Sir George Grindle? They were a pair

“Justly formed to meet, by nature;”

inasmuch as the worthy baronet—as every baronet is indiscriminately styled—had no comfortable settled household establishment of his own. Of the two sons he had, the one he liked was never at home, and the one he did *not* like, was *always* at home. George was ever to be found where fashion and gaiety called. White's he had not achieved, but his head was invariably to be seen over one of the blinds of the morning room at Crocky's—his cab a fixture on the outside, until some of the numerous pursuits with which young men of a particular school kill time and keep themselves alive, attracted him to a more distant part of town. With the shades of evening he returned home, dressed, and proceeded to dine; finishing his daily career at night, in the bright fane where he had begun it in the morning.

Frank—the half-brother of this agreeable *rout*, was as little like his relation as possible—or, as somebody says—“so far from it, quite the reverse,” Frank had read much—taken honours at Oxford—was generally accomplished—rigidly just, and honourable in the highest degree. From his earliest youth upwards, he had felt conscious of the difference which existed between his father's feelings towards him, and those which he entertained for George. This consciousness had the effect of depressing him, and increasing his natural shyness; and while George was revelling and sparkling in all the best parties of the season, Frank was either employed in scientific pursuits, to which he was enthusiastically devoted, or passing his evening in the domestic circle of some quiet family, in the studio of an artist, or the museum of a naturalist: in fact, they were, in person, mind, character, and manner, as dissimilar as light from darkness; or (not to waste time upon similes), as any one thing in the world can be from another.

This is a brief outline of the families of the two club friends, whose acquaintance, begun in the club, was maintained in the club, and who, heretofore, as the reader may have gathered by the brief colloquy with which the narrative opens, had never visited each other domestically: nor, indeed, had they come to confession with regard to the actual state of their affairs, so intimately connected with the settlement of the fate of two persons dear to each of the principals, but neither of whom, at the time the dialogue just recorded took place, was conscious of the other's existence.

"Now, Frank," said Sir George to the colonel, "is a mere humdrum fellow; calls himself a man of science; knows better than the Bible tells us when the world was made, and how it was made; gives every thing its classical definition, and calls a tittlebat by a name which, when written, is half-an-inch longer than the fish itself; travels all over the world with a wallet and hammer, and last year began to chip down the Alps to see what they are made of, and brought home some of the bits in his pocket."

"That'll do," said Bruff; "wallet and hammer—ninin-hammer you mean—no, no, *my* girl is rather too good for such a chipper as that."

"Now as to fortune," said Sir George, "the boys are, as they say in the city, 'much of a muchness.' George will have all *my* property, but Frank is nearly as well off, barring the baronetcy; a relative of his, who admires all the ologies and ographies, and thinks Frank a wonder, has said as much as that he will inherit all his 'worldly goods,' when he dies. All that may be, but George—"

"That'll do—that'll do," said the colonel; "nevertheless the elder is the man for *me*, and although, my dear Sir George, this conversation originally began more in jest than in earnest, I repeat what I said before, I declare I don't see why not, eh?"

"Nor I," replied the baronet; "we are both in some degree similarly placed—widowers, with large, cold, empty houses—no thought of marrying again; and if we could mend our condition by filling those houses with merry hearts and laughing faces, or else get rid of them altogether, I think we should do wisely."

"But," said Colonel Bruff, "there is one thing which requires a little consideration."

"What is that?" said Sir George; "nature of the property? *quid pro quo.*"

"Not exactly," said the colonel. "I mean the agreement to our plans on the part of the young people themselves."

"I'll answer for George," said the baronet.

"That'll do—that'll do," replied the colonel. "As for my Jane, she knows enough of her father to rely upon his judgment, and too little of the world, to be able to question his motives; so, as the ice is broken, the sooner we really talk the matter over seriously and more in detail, the better pleased I shall be."

"Suppose," said Sir George, "I was to hint at the affair tomorrow, if I catch sight of my elder boy. I know he is inclined to marry, so I think I shall easily be able to ascertain his feelings in a talk of ten minutes."

"That'll do," said the colonel.

"Happy's the wooing
That's not long a doing."

In this, and many similar apophthegms, touching the importance and value of speedy completions of matrimonial arrangements (which, by the way, had their views and objects been different, they would have been the forwardest to reprehend), until the small "pint each" gave way to a second double pint, in the shape of a bottle of claret between them, over which they fully intended to discuss at a greater length, and with more of detail, the project they had in view, had it not been that Mr. Snob—a regular club bore,—who by some fatality had once accidentally met Sir George Grindle somewhere at dinner, where he was *not* introduced to him, claimed him as his friend; brought his pint of Bucellas, or Marsala, or some such stuff, to the common stock, and of course, destroyed completely the opportunity of talking over matters, of which the two elderlies were most anxious to avail themselves.

Never, perhaps, was a mere casual acquaintance so speedily or so strangely ripened into that sort of give and take intimacy, the spirit of which appeared to be, the giving a daughter by one, and the taking her by another; but the few vague observations which we have made on the disagreeableness of both their establishments, may perhaps account, in some trifling degree for the sympathy by which two bowing and speaking associates in a large society were so suddenly transformed into bosom friends.

As the communication is perfectly confidential and will go no further, there is but little difficulty in describing this great, tall, swaggering Colonel Bruff, one of the "high contracting parties" to the league offensive and defensive, which was on the point of being entered into, as a kind of human monster. He was a big animal, and thence seemed to derive an impression that he was of consequence. He was a hard-headed man, not by any means in the complimentary acceptation of the phrase; he was coarse and overbearing in his manners, and, as far as his daughter Jane was concerned, a tyrant of the first water.

When she, at his express command, sat at the head of his table, she was subjected to a constant "fire" of reprehension and sarcasm. When for the sake of his "own position," as he called it, she yielded to his wish to receive small parties of his friends (dignified into *soirées* by the pastrycooks who furnished the nastiness, and swelled into concerts by the voices of the second-rate screamers of the Opera-house), every thing went wrong, and poor Jane, commanded by her father to dress her countenance in smiles, too often found her eyes suffused with tears.

Now Jane, as we have seen, had no mother-in-law; but Jane was perhaps worse off than if she had had one. A mother-in-law would at least have been a responsible person—she might even have loved her for her father's sake—she might have been an agreeable companion—she might have been a mistress of the house, calculated to draw round her husband an agreeable circle,

of acquaintance, who might have rendered that house at least a comfortable home for *him!* But no—instead of such a person, bearing his name, and filling an equal place in society, Jane had—when she was under her father's roof—to endure the half-enduring, half-patronizing, pertness and presumption of Mrs. Smylar, who endeavoured to combine in the attributes of her character, the meritorious pretensions of an affectionate governess, with those of a zealous and prudential housekeeper; always contriving, if any family discussions or dissensions arose, to take part—very deferentially—with the daughter against the father, and *vice versa*, with the father against the child.

It cannot be for a moment doubtful to the reader, that however desirous Colonel Bruff might feel to keep Jenny as much apart as possible from this third estate, which had sprung up in his establishment, Jenny herself was scarcely less so. It is true that the girl was as pure and as innocent as well-bred girls of her age in England generally are; but purity and innocence must have degenerated into something much lower in the scale of human nature, if common observation and the natural intellect of nineteen—female nineteen—did not discover in the pert, flippant manner of such a person as Mrs. Smylar, especially associated with the good-natured acquiescence of her “master,” something more than the ordinary relation between them established by the rules of society. Besides, if Colonel Bruff’s head ached, Mrs. Smylar was always ready to bathe his temples with *eau de Cologne*; if anything had disagreed with him, Mrs. Smylar prepared the curative remedy. In fact, Jane saw enough to convince her that Mrs. Smylar had more influence over her father than she ought to have; and Colonel Bruff was—as was Mrs. Smylar too—perfectly satisfied that she was aware of the state of things as they existed.

As for Mrs. Smylar, she was a sharp, clever person—pretty, but *passive*. She began life as a sort of half-scholar, half-teacher, at a “ladies’ boarding-school,” but having been suspected of a too great intimacy with a respectable young hairdresser employed, in the presence of some matured authority, to cut, curl, and friz the young ladies, thought it expedient to leave the seminary, as they call these establishments, and join a company of actors somewhere in the West of England. There she learned all the superficial trickery which she afterwards employed so much to her advantage; and although a “dead failure” on the stage, picked up just enough of the school and system to become a remarkably good actress off of it; to which skill might, in no small degree, be attributed the extraordinary influence which she had contrived to establish over the gallant and distinguished Colonel Bruff.

This pertinacious and persevering personage had, it seems quite evident, one great object in view—an object of which she never lost sight. The reader may, without much difficulty,

guess what it was—the attainment, at some future period, of the hand, as she felt conscious she already possessed the heart, of the colonel. From this point she never permitted her thoughts to wander, or her eyes to stray. The only obstacle which struck her as insurmountable, was the presence and position of his daughter. If *she* were once married, the necessity for the great inconvenient house in Harley-street would cease. Jane would be established somewhere—where, what cared *she*? And then the dear colonel would secure his happiness by marrying *her*, and setting up—or sitting down—in the country, all snug and comfortable, reposing on his laurels,—which, to say truth, would have afforded no full-sized bed.

It must be quite evident that this “state of things,” as we have just called it, could not fail naturally and of course to predispose Jane for any change of circumstances which could produce a change of events; and therefore the colonel, who knew the world, as he said, and moreover, as we believe, never had the slightest intention of marrying Mrs. Smylar, felt assured that he could make Jane “my lady” with her own free will and consent; get rid of his rickety establishment; and compress Mrs. Smylar’s abilities as a housekeeper into a smaller sphere of action, and so go on dining at his club, in the full enjoyment of all essential comforts at home, free from the almost perpetual storms which occurred when Jane, as things now stood, happened to be under the paternal roof.

Now, *per contra*, as the merchants say, what was Sir George Grindle about when he so innocently and accidentally fell into the conversation with Colonel Bruff? What object had *he*, to be so soon seduced or induced into an acquaintance with the bald-headed soldier-officer? He knew nothing of him, beyond the intercourse, which seldom takes place casually or accidentally, or even incidentally, in a large community of the extent and character of the *re-unions* of modern London. But then he had observed him as his neighbour, at his favourite table, squabbling about trifles—doubting the veracity of the waiters—talking loud about impositions “in regard” of something which he had ordered, or there being more bone than there ought to be in a cutlet, or something of the sort;—which, knowing the world a little, induced him to believe that the grumbler must be rich. He soon found out some of the leading facts of his *ease*; and having himself a son who had run through all his disposable property, and who was anxious to pull up and retrieve during his father’s lifetime, by securing a fortune in return for the feather which his title would confer,—he naturally thought that the one would be desirable in the eye of a swaggerer *with cash*, whom, as he thought, might be seasonably supplied with the commodity in demand, by a still greater swaggerer *without any*. And so began, and, so far as we have seen, progressed, the acquaintance of Sir George Grindle and Colonel Bruff.

It might perhaps please the reader, and save him some trouble hereafter, if he were now to get a little more insight into the relative positions in society which these worthies actually held, than he has been enabled to gain from the few broken bits of the dialogue in which he found them indulging when he first opened the book. Moreover, we may be expected to say something of the gentle Jane, and how and in what degree the curious contrivances and strange machinations in progress as to her settlement for life affected, and were likely to be received by, that really amiable and interesting girl.

What she would have felt or said had she, thirty miles away from the scene of the dialogue, been aware of its leading, sole subject, it is not for us either to imagine or anticipate; but supposing—which, considering she was turned nineteen, was by no means an impossible or improbable case—she happened to be in love, and had pledged her affections to some fond and favoured lover,—all that these excellent performers of the prose duet, of which we have extracted only a little to serve as notes for the reader, could say or do, might, and the chances are would, turn out to be “mere moonshine;” inasmuch as if Love gets into the heart, it will get out somewhere; and with one of your quiet, silent, meek-looking girls, like Miss Bruff, the case is hopeless. You might as well wash Mount Etna with Gowland’s Lotion, in the hopes of preventing an eruption, as expect to extinguish the steady flame smouldering in such a bosom.

But of Jane hereafter;—unconscious as she was when these worthies talked the matter over, so let her for the present remain; if any of my readers quarrel with Jane Bruff in the end, why then I must quarrel with my readers.

As regards the paternity, Bruff—Papa Bruff—the colonel, was the founder of his own fortune. From a reverential dislike to do that which a Frenchman of great wit and power once said he was in the habit of doing when he found himself getting too forward in company, too exuberant and too lively—“*dans ce cas-là, je pense toujours de mon pauvre père qui est mort*”—Bruff never mentioned directly or indirectly his excellent sire. Of a grandfather it appears that, in the general acceptance of the word, he had a sort of faint cloudy idea in the abstract; but as to the embodying or identification of any such relation, *relatively* to himself, he was as far from doing it as Adam would have been, if his wife had pressed him on the subject.

He was, as we have already said, a large, stupid noisy man, and must in the outset of his career have been a little, stupid, noisy boy; but he was a brave beast, and having entered the army—nobody exactly traced the beginning—he worked his way gallantly, and being, according to James Smith’s version, a “fireman,” was not “afraid of bumps,” and so went cutting, and slashing, and storming, and doing all sorts of things, which if he had attained a higher rank earlier in his career, might have

decorated and even ennobled him. But some four years after the Wellington-peace of Europe was concluded, a lady—plain, but genteel, and very rich withal—fell in with the captain, and moreover fell in love with him. "*De gustibus*," and all that. She was a little, delicate creature, and thought that this Bruff—Brevet-major Bruff—she never could understand the military distinction—would make a very agreeable husband, and so, much to the astonishment of his gallant comrades, their large companion in arms became hers.

Their wonder it must be confessed was soon deeply tinged with envy, when they discovered that in *his* case, the shafts of Cupid were tipped with gold: a metal which *so* used, has the wonderful quality of immediately healing where it wounds; whence, as we have been informed, the acknowledged assuasive qualities of gold-beaters' skin have been derived.

Mrs. Bruff, as the reader has already gathered, died fourteen months after her union with the powerful field-officer, leaving Jane at an age, equally unconscious of a mother's care and a mother's love. Bruff behaved in the best possible manner—was devoted to his child—maintained the establishment in Harley-street, to which the wife had not only taken a liking, but in which she died, and of which by means of her large property he had become possessed: thus retaining it as the memorial of his lady's taste, and the sanctuary for her daughter's education.

And all this went on; and Bruff, as a widower, did remarkably well, and little Jane grew up; and then at the persuasion of several of his friends, who represented that during her childhood, so large an establishment, unless he married again, was useless, he placed her under the care of a relation of his late wife, Mrs. Amersham, who, with her husband, having no children of their own, were delighted to receive her and her governess,—in the first instance, a nursery *bonne* of the Windsor soap and bread-and-butter school, thence ascending to *Miss Somebody*, was, in due time, succeeded by Mademoiselle Somebody much finer. During this period Bruff let his house, furnished, for a term of years, and having, by some carelessness of the well-wishers of the club to which he belonged, become a member of it, he became an *habitué* of the society in which the reader was first introduced to him.

When Jane came out—which she did, all mild and modest like the opening lily—gentle, tender, and unassuming—Mrs. Amersham presented her; and with her sixty thousand pounds she became "the belle of the season." At that period Bruff resumed the occupation of his residence, and for the last two years it had been placed under the *surveillance* of Mrs. Smylar.

Sir George Grindle was of a different *caste*; their association, therefore, accidental in the first instance, was somewhat remarkable. Sir George, as the reader knows, had been twice married, and as he has already admitted, married first for money, and

secondly for love—a sort of inversion of the ordinary course of things, for which one is not generally quite prepared. Of his first marriage his son George was the fruit.

George was his idol. Spoiled as a child—humoured as a boy—and almost obeyed by his father as a man—he had, even before he was of age, cost his fond parent nearly thirty thousand pounds. It was *this*, and perceiving what desperate inroads these juvenile indiscretions were making upon Sir George's property, that induced the maternal uncle of Frank—the half-brother of George—to hint to that most worthy, excellent, and amiable young man, that he was not to permit himself to be depressed or borne down by apprehensions for the future,—which it must be admitted with his prudential foresight he seriously entertained, not only for himself, but for George, who despised him; inasmuch as *he*, the aforesaid maternal uncle, would take care that at his death Frank should find even the nominal advantages of the elder brother—" barring the title"—not in any degree injurious to him.

Having traced the matter and the motives thus far, we will relieve the reader, and begin afresh in the next chapter

CHAPTER II.

THERE is not, perhaps, in the whole catalogue of cant words which have either been adopted into, or made up expressly under peculiar circumstances for, the English language, one so frequently used, and so little understood, as the word Dandy. It is in every body's mouth; but what does it mean? it is the definition of an object, which none of the people who talk about it can *positively* define; simply, because every individual who attempts to do so, erects in his or her own mind a standard of dandyism, precisely in relation to the sphere in which he or she respectively and individually moves.

There is no better mode of illustrating this position, and exhibiting the difficulty of coming to any thing like a fixed point of dandyism, than by quoting a portion of the prologue written by the elder Colman to Garrick's two-act comedy of "Bon Ton." The various and varying opinions as to what Bon Ton really is, or rather was, described in the following lines, will serve admirably well to regulate the very vague and numerous popular ideas of what a "dandy" is in the present day.

The lines to which we beg attention are these :

"Fashion in ev'ry thing bears sov'reign sway,
And words and periwigs have had their day;

Each have their purlicus too, are modest each,
In stated districts; wigs as well as speech.
The Tyburn scratch, thick club, and Temple tie,
The parson's *feather-top*, frizz'd broad and high,
The coachman's cauliflower, tiers on tiers,
Differ not more from bags and brigadiers
Than great St. George's, or St. James's styles,
From the broad dialect of broad St. Giles.

What is *bon ton*?—‘Oh! dim it,’ cries a buck,
Half drunk—‘ask me, my dear, and you're in luck :
Bon ton's to swear, break windows, beat the watch,
Kick up a row, drink healths, and roar a catch.
Keep it up, keep it up, let us take our swing,
Bon ton is life, my boys—*bon ton's* ‘the thing.’
‘Ah! I loves life, and all the joys it yields,’
Says Madame Fussock, fresh from Spitalfields ;
‘Bone tone's the space 'twixt Saturday and Monday,
And riding in a one-horse chay on Sunday;
In drinking tea on summer afternoons
At Bagnigge Wells, with china and gilt spoons;
‘Tis laying by our stuffs, red cloaks, and pattens,
To dance *cowtillions*, dress'd in silks and satins.’

“Vulgar!” cries Miss, ‘observe in higher life,
The feather'd spinster, and three-feather'd wife;
The club's *bon ton*—*bon ton's* a constant trade
Of rout, festino, ball, and masquerade;
‘Tis plays and puppet-shows.—‘Tis something new;
‘Tis losing thousands every night at loo.
Nature it thwarts; it contradicts all reason;
‘Tis stiff French stays, and fruit when out of season;
A rose, when half-a-guinea is the price,
A set of bays scarce bigger than six mice;
To visit friends you never wish to see;
Marriage 'twixt those who never can agree!
Old dowagers, dress'd, painted, patched, and curl'd,—
This is bon ton, and *this we call ‘the WORLD !’*”

It is impossible, as we have already said, better or more forcibly to exemplify the different views taken of the same subject in different classes of society, than Colman the elder has done in this *jeu d'esprit*. Nor is the extract valueless on its own account, as exhibiting what really were the notions of *bon ton* in the best circles in the year 1775, when Garrick wrote the comedy, and Colman furnished the prologue.

But, putting the variety of opinions of the people of 1775 as to *bon ton* in juxtaposition with the opinions of the people of the

present age as to dandyism, affords us the opportunity of pointing to the mistakes which so generally occur as to the genus Dandy.

Taking the subject from the base—beginning at the beginning—let us merely recall the reader's attention to that best of all possible songs that ever was primarily written, and subsequently improved in an eminent degree by a modern Mantuan bard—"The Dog's-meat Man."

In that poem—and poem it strongly claims and richly deserves to be called—the heroine, ill-used, deceived, and deluded as she eventually proves to be, when in the plenitude of her admiration, not only for the mental, but personal qualities of her beloved, she beholds him

"In a jacket and breeches of velveteen,"

is so completely overcome by the effect of his appearance in a garb to the attainment of which she herself had largely contributed, that she exclaims, with all the "naturalness" of a mind pre-eminently distinguished by "viridity,"

"My eycs ! what a *dandy* of a dog's-meat man !

therby convincing the auditor or the reasoner upon the matter, that to *her*, "a jacket and breeches of velveteen," were the attributes and essentials of dandyism ; in *her* class, that was the standard—the point—the *ultima Thule of tripe-ography*.

Go a little higher. Among the dollymops and spider-brushers, a red-fisted, knock-kneed footboy, who curls his hair and frizzles it on the top of his head, and whose cotton stockings are not more than ordinarily splashed in running of errands, is held to be a dandy.

Higher still ; in the steward's or housekeeper's room, the word scarcely occurs, because the progression of knowledge, and the upward march of intellect proscribes the use of a term, which seldom or never is heard reproachfully up-stairs.

The milliners' shopboys, with bunches of ringlets under their hats, cocked on one side, dirty paste studs in the daily fronts of their weekly shirts ; who, when the shutters are up, strut about with cigars in their mouths in the streets, and frequent what are called the saloons of the playhouses ; are "regular dandies" in the eyes of their female friends—not in those of their casual associates in the lobby or oyster-shop, who, wretched as is their lot, have sense enough, poor creatures ! to despise the "things" to whom "their poverty, but not their will," drives them to be civil and engaging.

Then the city clerks, the juniors of the less prominent public departments, young gentlemen in solicitors' offices, and medical

guerlants (peculiar in their style), are *all* dandies with the Misses in their own circle, and wear figured stocks, and double pins of mosaic gold, siamesed together by a little chain of some equally equi-val metal. They dance quadrilles fatiguingly, and *galope* as if they were going to fly out of the windows, amidst the tender glances of their admiring dowdies, who look forward to a three-and sixpenny ball in the very identical rooms, in which the assemblies called "Almack's" (for no other reason than that the rooms *are* the same), by virtue of the potent spells of the ladies' pretences, become *tabooed* ground, the moment the banner of aristocracy is hoisted there.

Then there are military dandies — after *their* fashion — not guardsmen, life-guardsmen, blues, lancers, or any thing of the kind, but minor stars, who establish themselves like the late mischievous Smith of Halifax,

"A captain bold,
Who lived in country quarters,"

and flourish upon the reputation of a pair of French-polished boots in the provinces for six months; leaving, wherever they go, with the most unqualified satisfaction, imputations of dandyism, cast upon them by the wistful spinsters of all ages, ranged against the walls of the low-ceiling'd drawing-rooms of the rural dowagers, who, in such communities, dispense black tea and buttered toast at seven o'clock in the afternoon, in the sanguine expectation of taking the expense out of the company by dint of a round game played with dingy cards, bearing on their backs certain marks ready for domestic recognition.

Then there are sadly vulgar dandies of a higher class, who entirely overdo the thing—overshoot the mark, and fail in their efforts to be any thing but objects of ridicule and contempt. But they are all *called* dandies; whereas, in point of fact, *the* dandy is a man who, dressing exceedingly well, without any thing particularly *outré* about him, is well informed, perfectly *au fait* of what is going on, accomplished, unaffected, gay, and agreeable; whose appointments, whether of person or equipage, are resplendently fresh, and who, with all these attributes of wealth and taste about him, appears unconscious of any particular excellence or peculiarity in any point connected with himself. Moreover, of later years, the cultivation of taste and accomplishments in art and science, heretofore considered either unworthy the care, or beneath the notice, of the graceful and the gay, has been added to the pursuits of men, who are supposed by those who know literally nothing about them, to do nothing but lounge about, "staring modest women out of countenance" (the universal charge of the *οἱ πόλλοι*, against dandyism), flirting with other men's wives all day, talking nonsense all the evening, and gambling all night.

That, to a certain extent, some of these things *do* happen, perhaps there is no positively denying; but that what may really and truly be called a *dandy*, resembles, in the slightest degree, the wretched things who get a reputation amongst their own folks for dandyism, is most strenuously and earnestly to be denied.

Now, after this exordium, come we to Mr. George Grindle, the elder son and heir of the worthy baronet, with whom and whose interesting dialogue with Sandy Bruff the reader is already acquainted. George Grindle—this idol of his sire—was certainly of the good school of dandies; but not a sixth form boy. If dandies were merchant-ships, George would have been in class B at Lloyd's. There was all the forwardness and pretension requisite to give him a first-class degree, but there was something about him which kept him down; little stories and anecdotes, not told by himself, of himself, or against himself, but which he did not particularly like to hear spoken of, were going about; and although he made every effort to outdo; as far as appearance went, those who were far above him in every point of character, rank, and quality, still there was always something, a kind of alloy, for which nobody could exactly count, but which hung round him, and kept him out of certain sets, unless, indeed, he made such efforts to get into them, even temporarily, that a rejection of his advances would have rendered the matter personal.

In fact, George, although qualified by station and fortune to be the intimate associate of all the men with whom he mixed, was popular with nobody. The principle of his conduct seemed to be selfishness; his whole life appeared to be one continued effort to "get the better" of those with whom he lived; making a sharp bet, with the certainty of winning; selling a horse to a dear friend with a reversionary lameness; exhibiting his capacity for learning sleight-of-hand from a professed conjurer, by cutting kings at *écarté*, without making his adversary aware of the nature of his education, or his aptitude for attainments in that particular science. These, and a few other "points," brought him into that position which many other gentlemen of his standing occasionally occupy, and which placed him—and we mention it without the remotest approach to any appropriation of the initial letter, except as to graduation—in class B of Dandyism.

Still, George was immaculate in the worthy baronet's eyes. He saw in all his shirkings, jests; in all his shufflings, drollery; and at breakfast, whenever the hopeful heir honoured the "governor" with his company, the great delight of Sir George was to hear his elder son recount (in a manner not belonging to class A), certain cunning things he had achieved during the preceding day, and the extraordinary effect his dexterity had produced during the evening.

It so happened, that on the morning immediately succeeding the club conversation between Sir George and Colonel Bruff, the heir-apparent not only breakfasted at home, but at or about the same hour as the "governor;" a circumstance which, to a gentleman disposed as the worthy baronet was, to think every thing for the best, appeared an exceedingly happy coincidence, the felicity of which was considerably enhanced by the rarity of the association between himself and his beloved son at their matinal meal.

No time was to be lost; the iron was to be stricken while it was hot; the hay was to be made while the sun shone; and Sir George resolved that he would not part with the "hopes of the family," until he had fully explained to him the occurrences of the preceding evening, and taught him to appreciate the advantages immediately derivable from his marriage with Miss Bruff. But there *was* a drawback—a let—a hindrance, which, with any thing like delicacy or decency, the worthy baronet could not get rid of. A third person partook of the breakfast—Frank, equally the son of Sir George, but not equally the brother of Sir George's eldest son. In *his* presence, the partial father did not think it seasonable or convenient to open the proceedings, or indeed even glance at the favourite subject of the passing time.

Why should he maintain this strange reserve, it would be difficult to guess; because, as the reader may already have discovered, the inclinations, views, and pursuits of the half-brothers, were entirely at variance; and although Frank treated "the dandy" with affection and kindness, they were returned with hauteur, and a sneer of superiority which, in spite of his efforts to rally, invariably produced the intended and desired effect of damping his spirits and silencing his conversation. Yet the reason why Sir George declined touching upon the affair in Frank's presence, was his belief—most ill-founded—that Frank, with all his show of gentleness and mildness, was bitterly jealous of what the father considered his half-brother's superior success in the world, and that if made aware of any project for George's aggrandizement or advantage, he would immediately apply the whole force of his "sly cunning" to its subversion or frustration.

Sir George might have rested quite satisfied that honest Frank would have done no such thing; and, to say truth, even if he did occasionally feel—not jealousy—but mortification, when he saw George preferred before him upon all occasions, and even if his sentiments were not to be characterized so highly as we are disposed to think them, the very fact that such a step in life as that which his father was about to propose, would inevitably either remove him from the paternal establishment in Grosvenor-street, or transfer it to the young couple, or, which seemed more probable still, break it up altogether, would

have been in itself a strong reason for his favouring the plan, inasmuch as in any one of the three cases Frank would be forthwith relieved from an association in which, by constant comparison with his more favoured relation, he was always sure to come off, as the phrase goes, "second best," in the domestic circle.

"Governor, shall I give you some of this pie?" said George, proceeding to the side table. "Slow coach, our cook, governor—denced shy of truffles—have a bit?"

"None, dear George," said the fond father.

"No use asking *you*, Frank," continued the heir-apparent. "You don't do this sort of thing. I find it nourishing and cherishing, although, I must say, we don't shine here. However, there's no getting on without a woman at the head. Governor, why don't you marry again? You have tried it twice, with the most satisfactory results—hasn't he,—Frank?—at him again, Ginger—try the third time. That's the luckiest. We are all right and snug—you can do us no manner of harm, whatsoever, governor, and you may do us a great deal of good. I'll go a hunting for you; and see if I don't start you in the connubial line uncommon comfortable."

The unexpectedly curious turn the conversation had taken—and of which George's speech, considered as a specimen of the respectful tone and spirit in which he was in the habit, ordinarily, of addressing the paternity, is rather remarkable—had nearly thrown the worthy baronet off his guard, and led him into, what he would afterwards have considered, the perilous indiscretion of instantly imparting the whole of his favourite scheme to his amiable and respectful son; and of suggesting to him the infinitely more reasonable and feasible plan of procuring a head to the family on his own account, by winning the heart and gaining the hand of Miss Jane Bruff, and taking possession of the house, from which he and the half-brother would be prepared consequently to depart. But Sir George was in the habit of doing what the celebrated Mr. Broster's pupils ought always to do—he thought twice before he spoke once; and, therefore, all he said in answer to the filial suggestion was,

"My dear George, how *can* you talk such nonsense?"

"Nonsense, governor," said George; "no nonsense at all. I'll point you out a half a score of old ones, who have started later than you would if you took my advice, and see how snug and steady they go, and what comfortable houses they keep for the children of their earlier days."

"Well," said Sir George. "I will talk this over with you by and by. Perhaps I may have something to say upon the subject which will not displease you."

"Not a bit of it," said George. "Bring whom you like—old—young—tall—short—fat—lean—all the same to me. Only don't give us a blue mother—don't cram the house with 'ologies' of all sorts; and don't give us a singing mother, who will

crowd us with signors and signoras, and stun us with their infernal noise;—give us somebody that understands the thing, and will keep the house going, and I for one shall be uncommon delighted."

This flourishing speech of George's, which meant nothing in itself, was intended to express by a side wind the contempt which he felt for Frank's addiction to science, art, and accomplishments, for which he had no taste or fancy. But Frank was too well accustomed to the character and object of George's hypothetical observations to take any notice of the attack.

"Rely upon it," said Sir George, "if any lady assumes the government of this establishment she will neither be very learned, nor very highly accomplished." This was an assertion thrown out for the purpose of extracting a more detailed expression of George's opinion upon the point, inasmuch as from the little that his new old friend, Sandy Bruff, had said concerning his daughter Jane, he had been induced to believe, that however amiable her disposition might be, or however estimable her qualities, she was neither remarkably handsome in person, nor highly cultivated in mind.

"I'm not particular, governor," said George; "please yourself and you'll please me. I say, governor, you recollect those fellows—I name no names, because perhaps Frank will be shocked at our showing up our friends, and show us up in turn—but those fellows at Crocky's—what I call the Dando-dandies,—who have no money, but lots of appetite—who pitch in at supper like any thing, and never take a box in their hands, while the chaps who don't eat are losing their money like smoke."

"To be sure," said Sir George.

"Well, the fellows there," said George, "out of that have got up a deuced good joke, and mean some night to put up over the supper-room door, this—Stop," added he, "I—don't recollect it exactly—but I wrote it down—I've got it here—ah! here it is—

"He hath filled the hungry with good things, but the rich he hath sent empty away."

"George, George," said Frank, seeing, moreover, his father burst into a fit of immoderate laughter, "for heaven's sake consider what you are doing!—this may be witty,—perhaps is witty, and apposite too,—but recollect the crime, the sin of applying these words of Holy Writ, recorded in its sacred pages with reference to the Deity, to the keeper of a St. James's-street club-house."

"Holy Writ!" said George, staring with his eyes wide open, and his mouth screwed up into a minute circle. "I did not know anything about that—I thought it was an uncommon good hit at Crocky, so I booked it."

"I know my dear brother George," said Frank, rising from the breakfast-table, "that any efforts of mine to draw your at-

tention to subjects of the highest importance here and hereafter, are not only vain, but are received as intrusions and impertinences; but, forgive me when I say that your use of this sacred quotation, criminal as it appears to me in the first instance, is aggravated in its heinousness by the palliation which, unhappily for yourself, you have attempted, on the score of ignorance of its source. I know I shall be laughed at, and abused for this burst of feeling. But, George, the day may come when the course you are pursuing may lose its charms, and you may remember with regret the efforts vainly made, even by a younger and a half-brother, to show you its delusions and its dangers."

Saying which, Frank gratified his worldly parent infinitely more than it was generally his good fortune to do, by walking out of the room, and leaving the two members of Crooky's to discuss the favourite proposition of the elder one of the pair.

"That's a pretty go, governor!" said George, as his wounded and indignant relation closed the door. "I meant no harm—however, it is quite clear to me that Frank ought to be a parson."

"Never mind, George," said the father, "what *he* is to be, or what *he is*—think of yourself, George."

"Why," replied the son, "I am rather in that line already—only I'm getting stumped."

"The road to emancipation is plain, straight, and open to you," said Sir George.

"But," said the son, "it seems to me that according to modern practice, emancipation, as you call it, costs a sight of money."

"Yours is free—"

"What free, gratis for nothing, as the fellow in the Harlequin farce says?"

"Saddled with but one condition," said Sir George.

"Ah! but one condition, governor, in *my* state," replied the hopeful youth, "may be something like the last feather that breaks the nag's back."

"What do you think it is?" asked Sir George.

"A tie-up by trustees," said George, "or perhaps some infernal appointment abroad."

"No; guess again, and nearer home," said Sir George.

"Can't," replied George, junior.

"What d' ye think of the head to the establishment of which you have just been talking?" said the baronet.

"I have told you *that* before, governor," said George. "I think it would suit uncommon well."

"Yes," said Sir George; "but the head to be differently put on—don't you comprehend?—instead of *my* furnishing the head, furnish it yourself—get a wife."

"Whose?" said George, evidently borrowing an old joke, which, like many others, is handed down traditionally, through certain classes of society.

"Whose but your own?" said his father.

"My own!" said George, starting back, evidently shocked at the notion of incurring such a responsibility.

"Your own," replied the baronet. "A charming, unselected girl, with sixty thousand pounds, given her out and out, with her father's free will and consent."

"I like the sound of it, governor," said George; "but I take it to be no go."

"Why?" said Sir George.

"Why, I don't know," said the young gentleman; "but I don't think, you see, that I am by any means what the world calls a marrying man."

"Consider, George," said the anxious father, "this fortune will put you—and me—both of us at our ease—and—"

"Yes," interrupted the prudent—whenever self was concerned—youth; "but depend upon it, whoever the respectable fogey may be, whom you have raked out somewhere, he'll want a tie-up, and then you know the thing's of no manner of use whatsoever."

"I doubt that," said Sir George, "*he* has his reasons for marrying his daughter, as we have ours that she should be married into our family."

"Who's the sire?" said George.

"His name is Bruff," was of course the answer.

"Unknown," replied George; "can't calculate upon consequences."

"He is a colonel in the army, and wishes to see his only child well established in the world," said Sir George.

"Good!" replied the son, "and so means to marry her to *me*—that's not a bad notion—sixty thousand pounds would certainly come in well just now, governor; but have you ever seen her—had her trotted out—what is she like—plain, pretty, passable, or *passée*?—not that it strikes me that matrimony suits my book."

"I have *not* seen her," said Sir George, "but from her father's account of her—"

"Oh! is that all, govenor? That's no go," said George; "hear *you* speak of *me*, and hear any body else do the same thing—you can't think what an uncommon dissimilarity there exists between the reports. I dare say, Mr. Bruff, or Gruff, or whatever his name is, thinks his daughter a queen of beauty, and may make you believe her so—but I—"

"Ay," interrupted the anxious parent, "but sixty thousand pounds down—"

"Does," continued George, "I confess, make a very considerable alteration in the state of affairs. But perhaps you would be good enough just to let me a little into the secret. To begin with, who is Bruff by himself Bruff?"

"I have told you; a very distinguished officer," said Sir George.

"That's no clue," answered the dandy; "there are plenty of those. Where did you light upon him—at the United Service?"

"No," said Sir George, who, by virtue of the silver epaulettes

of a deputy lieutenant, was enrolled in that gallant and distinguished society. "I have been in the habit of meeting him constantly at the Doldrum."

"What is his line,—guardsman?" asked George.

"No," said Sir George; "but none the worse for *that*; since, if he had had an opportunity of finishing his work before the Duke had finished the work altogether at Waterloo, Bruff might have been a general, titled and decorated."

"I don't care, governor," said George, "general or corporal, it comes much to the same point if the girl has the stumpy, and is something decent to look at."

"There," said the solicitous parent, "I am myself in the dark, and therefore unable to enlighten you. I tell you I have never seen her." "Nor (*he might* have added) did I ever hear of her till within four-and-twenty hours of the moment when I concluded that she would make an excellent wife for *you*." This, however, he only "mentally ejaculated," and left his darling son to conjure up some bright image of beauty, calculated at once to dazzle, charm, and fix him.

"But, governor," said George, "there are two parties to all bargains—how d'ye know she'll have *me*?"

"How?" said Sir George. "Because she is an amiable, well-regulated daughter, and obeys orders. My friend, the colonel, says he can depend upon her immediate acquiescence in any proposal of his upon such a point."

"What is her name, governor?" said George.

"Jane," was the reply.

"Jenny Bruff don't sound aristocratic," said George; "not that I care for that—Jane itself is a deuced pretty name—but Bruff—eh!"

"What's in a name, George?" said the governor. "Besides, that annoyance is soon got rid of by marrying her."

"True—but then," said George, contracting his brows, and passing his hand across his forehead, "there is something serious in having a wife, governor."

"But something exceedingly agreeable in having her fortune," said the provident parent.

"Upon my life," said George, "now, really, joking apart, I know the money is an immense hit—a regular go—but, I declare, even if, she would accept me, I don't think—I don't, upon my life, think I could undertake the responsibility. In fact, marrying—I don't know—I wish you would marry her yourself, which would answer all my purposes, governor."

"But perhaps not hers," said Sir George. "I don't exactly understand what you mean about responsibility; you will be more respectable as a married man; you will have your house, your establishment, your place in society, and your debts paid."

"I admit that, governor," said George, "and being out of debt, would be an uncommon nice thing, even for the novelty of the

feeling. But then, marrying Miss Bruff, governor—taking a wife for life to clear off temporary incumbrances—is like putting on a perpetual blister to cure the toothache."

"Well, George," said his father, "will you do me one favour?"

"A thousand, governor," replied the son, "if they don't involve a disbursement of the stumpy."

"Then have you any objection to be presented to the young lady?" said Sir George; "see her—make her acquaintance, and that without her being in the slightest degree aware of the object of the visit. Say 'yes!' and I am sure, from the anxiety which my friend Bruff has expressed on the point, he will speedily make some arrangement to make up the party."

"Where is Jenny Bruff now, governor!" said George.

"She is in the country," said Sir George.

"At boarding-school, or in a respectable lunatic asylum?" asked the son.

"Neither," said Sir George; "she is staying, as it is her custom to do for a considerable part of the year, at the house of some relations of her late mother—most excellent people—highly respectable, and full of—"

"Never mind, governor," interrupted George, "I am prepared to go all lengths, let the end be what it may; for that which every man wants, I want more than any man wants it on earth; and so command me to a gentleman who wishes to perpetuate baronets through the female line of his family. I am entirely at your service; and although I may break a heart or two by turning Benedick, picking up and living pretty, I dare say I can make amends out of the 'military chest,'—ch, governor!"

With very few further remarks, retorts, observations, or suggestions, the dialogue between the father and son terminated, and they parted for the morning, under a sort of implied engagement to meet again during the course of the evening.

Frank, who really and truly had received a severe shock from the unqualified levity—blasphemy it must be called—of George, and was even more excited by the grounds of his apology for using words, of the sacred origin of which he avowed himself, by way of justification, so utterly and blindly ignorant, had retired to his study, a *sanctum* rarely, if ever, invaded by either his father or his brother, whose tastes and pursuits, as we have said and seen, were of a character so entirely opposed to his, that it would have cost them almost as much annoyance to make a descent upon his retreat, as it would have caused him to sustain it.

It is not to be supposed that Sandy Bruff, the colonel, had on his side, as one of the high contracting parties to the projected treaty, gone thus far with the preliminaries. But the fact having, somehow or other, reached the well-ringed ears of Mrs. Smylar. The pert old thing (and though old in face, she was still young in figure, quick in motion and active in all her turn-

ings and twistings) was the first, and indeed the only person to whom Sandy Bruff communicated the steps he had taken. In furtherance of the great object she had constantly in view, she pressed their speedy completion upon her gallant master (if he might be her master called, whose mistress she was) in every possible way, and with every possible apparent motive, except those by which she was really and truly actuated. Nor is it to be imagined, that such being the case, she left any argument unbroached, any suggestion unmade, to strengthen his resolution, and urge him to immediate proceedings to bring about the match ; pointing out to him especially what a capital thing it would be for him to get rid of all the worry of a large, cold, empty house in Harley Street, by living in which he was at a needless expense, and taking a small villa in the vicinity of town, or perhaps a snug house at Brighton, which she could entirely manage and make comfortable for him, with not more than three or four servants.

"That'll do, that'll do," said Bruff, as the assiduous wasp-waisted *verd antique* brought his hot white-wine-whey, after he was in bed. "That'll do, Smylar—eh!—I think you are right about Jenny, eh!—so am I—eh!"

During which little pithy observation, interrupted only by sips from the gentle diaphoretic prescribed and prepared by herself, for a cold which the gentle giant thought he had caught in a draught of air at the Doldrum, Mrs. Smylar, with a readiness and condescension far below her sphere in the establishment, performed the operation of "tucking him up" in the most comfortable manner, taking leave of him (as we presume for the night) by saying,

"Rely upon it, colonel, the happiest day you will ever have will be that upon which Miss Jane is married."

"That'll do, that'll do," said Bruff; "I quite agree with you—good night, old woman; for the present—eh!—that'll do."

And so, for the present, Mrs. Smylar retired.

And now that we have got sufficiently forward in our history, to see that all the four persons to whom the matrimonial scheme, by which Jane Bruff is to be settled for life, are unanimously agreed upon the wisdom and propriety of the arrangement, it becomes necessary for us to look at and examine the character and qualities of the intended and predestined bride herself, in order to ascertain in what degree the important fifth character in our *dramatis persona* may agree with the others; two of whom, be it understood, she had never heard of in her life, and one of whom, with all her affectionate regard for him, she felt conscious was entirely under the control of another.

Jane Bruff was—but *what* she was, must form the subject of another chapter.

CHAPTER III.

IT is no easy matter, whatever people may think of it, to describe the heroine of a simple story. To authors who deal largely in silken tresses and melting eyes, soul-fraught intelligence of expression, and a gentle mixture of roses and lilies by way of complexion, cherries for lips, and pearls for teeth, it may be a work of equal facility and felicity: but to plain-speaking, or rather plain-writing persons, who endeavour to describe with something like accuracy, scenes and circumstances as they occur, and put down upon paper the impressions which they themselves receive from the works of nature and art, it is far different. These poor creatures seldom or ever fall in with the ethereal beings whose "every action is grace," whose features "eclipse the chiselled beauties" of Praxiteles or Phidias; whose "ivory foreheads, scarce ever ruffled with a frown of anger, rival the driven snow, over whose dazzling *pile*, the raven locks twine and cluster like silken meshes to ensnare the hearts of venturous swains," "the qualities of whose minds emulate the beauties of their persons," "whose cérulean eyes, upturned to Heaven, are overflowed with pearly tears, bright heralds of the feelings of the heart," who "deem their lovers perfect," whose "lips are *deroid* of guile," who never do "*aught*" but good; who minister to the sick and aged poor, like "angels of light," and are dressed (according to the descriptions which are given of them) much after the hypothetical and apocryphal illustrations of the milliners and mantua-makers' magazines. Writers like ourselves are therefore thrown back on resources only to be found in the usual routine of worldly life.

It is to be hoped that the reader by this time has become more deeply interested in the personal appearance and mental qualities of Jane Bruff, than either the father or son, whom we left discussing what they consider other more important points connected with her, appeared to be; because, in a blind bargain, like that which had been struck between the worthy baronet and her father, the nature and character, conditions and effects, of such a negotiation, must necessarily be more or less affected by the beauties and merits of the object to be so strangely provided for.

There are, in the world ladies, some of whom we have ourselves known, who would fare much better by being so disposed of without a previous view; and who stand a better chance of being loved, as they say, "unsight, unseen," than after a personal exhibition; and others there are who, if eventually destined for display, are so cried up and so bepraised by their admiring friends and relations, that when the veil is actually withdrawn, and the object appears *in propria personad*, the effect produced

very much resembles that of the sudden disclosure of Mokanna's features :—

“ He raised the veil—the maid turn'd slowly round,
Look'd at him—shriek'd—and sank upon the ground.”

Now Jane Bruff was one of those girls who need not fear the piercing eyes of the most searching scrutineer. She certainly was *not* beautiful; but she was ten times more delightful than if she had been ten times as handsome. In the work which we have just quoted, there is a description which might well be applied to her, which runs thus :—

“ There's a beauty, for ever unchangingly bright,
Like the long sunny lapse of a summer's daylight ;
Shining on, shining on, by no shadow made tender,
Like Love falls asleep in its sameness of splendour.
This *was* not the beauty—oh ! nothing like this—
That to young Nourmahal gave such magic of bliss ;
But that loveliness, ever in motion, which plays
Like the light upon Autumn's soft shadowy days ;
Now here, and now there, giving warmth as it flies
From the lips to the cheek, from the cheek to the eyes ;
Now, melting in mist, and now breaking in gleams,
Like the glimpses a saint has of Heav'n in his dreams.
Then pensive it seem'd, as if that very grace,
That charm of all others was born with her face ;
And when angry—for e'en in the tranquillest climes
Light breezes will ruffle the flowers, sometimes—
The short passing anger but seem'd to awaken
New beauty, like flow'rs that are sweetest when shaken.
If tenderness touch'd her, the dark of her eye
At once took a darker, a heavenlier dye,
From the depth of whose shadow, like holy revealings,
From innermost shrines, came the light of her feelings.
Then her mirth—oh ! 'twas sportive as ever took wing,
From the heart with a burst, like the wild bird in Spring ;
Illumed by a wit that would fascinate sages,
Yet playful as Peris just loosed from their cages.
While her laugh, full of life, without any control,
But the sweet one of gracefulness, rang from her soul ;
And where it most sparkled, no glance could discover—
In lip, cheek, or eyes—for she brighten'd all over,
Like any fair lake that the breeze is upon,
When it breaks into dimples, and laughs in the sun.”

That this is beautifully poetical, who shall deny?—that it is not calculated to raise the expectations of the reader far above their probable fulfilment in the mind and person of Jane Bruff,

who shall assert? but that it is descriptive, in an eminent degree, of the character and qualities of that most amiable, accomplished, and delightful girl—I, for one, will maintain.

Perhaps in wit, she might not presume to emulate the “Light of the Harem;” but there was a well-tempered, well-regulated playfulness in her conversation, which could not fail to charm and delight, provided always she was away from the paternal roof. The colonel was a powerful officer, but neither amiable nor gentle; his daughter, if she possessed his affections, certainly received none of his attentions. She feared him with a fear which chilled the natural feelings of her heart; and when, as we have before said, he considered it necessary to give a few parties, in hopes mainly of getting her off his hands by a marriage after his own taste, she was destined to a sort of martyrdom during the whole season, from the querulous, or rather abrupt manner in which, even in the presence of those whom he wished to admire her, he corrected, lectured, and even scolded her, while doing the honours of his house really and truly in the best and most graceful possible manner.

Upon points of much graver importance Jane was all that could be wished; the harshness of the parent had never alienated the fondness of the child, and although suffering silently from a severity which she was justly conscious she did not deserve, she would have died rather than hear any human being traduce the fair fame of her father. She was pious without pretension, and charitable without ostentation. Perfectly well versed in all that is now considered essential to the education of a young lady, she was fully competent as a scholar, a linguist, an artist, a musician, and even if it came to that, as a “philosopher,” to take her place amongst any girls of her age or position in society. And all this without one grain of affectation or conceit; bearing all the praises that were lavished upon her everywhere (except at home) with a mildness and meekness, which the colonel set down as shyness and awkwardness—he himself being the controlling influence, colloquially called a “wet blanket,” by which her spirits were subdued, and her mental powers almost paralyzed.

How much of the paternal acerbity—as people fond of fine words would call it—was attributable to the influence of the dear half-governess, half-actress, part-housemaid, Mrs. Smylar, it would, perhaps, be difficult to ascertain; but it was curious enough that the disposition of Colonel Bruff towards Jane, and that of Sir George Grindle towards Frank, were singularly sympathetic, with the one exception, that the baronet had two sons to choose a favourite from, the colonel had but one daughter.

Nothing on earth can be more natural, than the supposition that Jane finding home so exceedingly uncomfortable, when there was a home to receive her, was infinitely happier with friends and relations, where the playfulness of her disposition, and buoyancy of her character, might have their scope—

— “without any control,
But the sweet one of gracefulness.”

of which we have before treated. And certainly in all the circle of her father's acquaintance, relations, and connexions, there was no resting-place she loved so much as the happy, hospitable house of the Amershams.

Oh! such people—such nice, comfortable, happy people! Yet even they had discovered one source of unhappiness; they had found an alloy to their gold, a dark spot upon their bright sun; they had no family; a circumstance, which however distressing to themselves, was fraught with the most beneficial results to their friends and acquaintance, who were thereby exempted from the kill-joy infliction of little pets, magnified into great wonders by their parents, and foisted into what else would be agreeable society, to talk nonsense suitable enough to their own ages and intellects, but to no other; and who, having dirtied their mouths and chins with sweetmeats and trash, which they never should swallow, scream themselves into hysterics when the said mouths and chins are wiped; and who having utterly marred the comfort of some hour or so, during which they have been let loose, are borne off to the nursery, internally and heartily anathematizing, in their small way, the hideous Glundalca who had been summoned to relieve the party by carrying them away.

Well do I remember seeing the greatest genius of our day, suddenly stopped after dinner, in one of his most splendid descriptions of an interesting—magnificiently interesting scene, by the petulant cry of a little urchin for some orange-chips in the dessert. His father, who, of course, was master of the house, sharply corrected the child for interrupting; and consequently made him cry louder than he had cried before.

“Poor bairn,” said the Immortal, smilingly, “it is not *his* fault.”

I never see a dose of dear little damp-nosed darlings administered after dinner, without thinking of this.

There is, however, something wanting to matrimonial happiness—in its perfect degree—where the connecting link with another generation is absent; and therefore Mr. and Mrs. Amersham were *not* perfectly happy. But barring this slight qualification, they were, perhaps, as enviable a pair as ever existed. He was the best-tempered, kindest-hearted man that ever lived, she the kindest-hearted, best-tempered woman. Their house was always gay, always agreeable; the people who visited them were universally pleasant, inasmuch, as if they had no qualification that way, they had no admission; and there was always something going on—parties—excursions—little reunions—snuggeries—&c., &c. Every body who has known such people, and such a house, will appreciate their delights and attractions,

and will therefore easily understand why Jane Bruff felt no repugnance, not only in preferring it to such a home as her own, with Mrs. Snylar for vicegerent, but to any of the houses within her reach, belonging to her other friends and connexions.

To describe the villa—place it could not be called—of this agreeable couple would be quite superfluous; they who know the world can as perfectly appraise the country-house of an agreeable small family, of some four or five thousand a-year, as Mr. George Robins can value a real property.

Chintz, cotton, comfort; snug rooms full of furniture; books, harps, pianofortes, bagatelle-tables, backgammon-boards, chess-boards, guitars, kaleidoscopes, sofas, squabs, cushions, ottomans; corners, recesses, little oriel windows, flowers, Eau de Cologne bottles, scattered books, albums, drawings, H. B.'s sketches (no matter what visitor suffers), little absurd work-boxes, which nobody uses, portefeuilles, pincushions, fire-boxes, snuff-boxes, souvenirs, miniatures of distant relations, in cases, lying on the tables, varieties of inkstands, peerages, directories; low chairs, long chairs, footstools, folding screens, a bright blazing fire, a snow-white poodle on the shaggy hearthrug, and a long-eared "Charley" in the lady's lap. That sounds snug, and is something like the way in which they "carried on the war," or rather enjoyed domestic peace, at Mr. Amer-ham's.

It was here, then, that Jane Bruff enjoyed the happiness which, as a motherless girl, was all in all to her; and although the difference of age between Jane and her cousin, the kind mistress of this agreeable home, was such as rather to make them feel like sisters than any other relation to each other, still, from their relative positions in society, all her kindness came as it were maternally to the gentle sensitive heart of dear Jane.

It is not to be supposed that a being so fair, so gentle, so lively, so good as Miss Bruff, had made so much progress in life and in society, without having been addressed in terms of admiration, or assailed in those of flattery. Had she been homely and coarse, dowdy and vulgar, short of an eye, or shorter in one leg than the other, the effect of the gallant colonel's fortune (or rather the report of it), would have been quite sufficient to give her a pair of these cerulean orbs of which mention has been previously made, or convert her hitchism of gait into a step sylph-like enough to make Taglioni jealous. Think, then, with the grace, the sweetness, the gentleness, the innocent playfulness, and the graver talents and sterling virtues of Jane, what must be the effect upon the herd of *aspirants* to fortune when they saw her, what she really was.

There was a man—one out of the flock that followed her—to whom she had more attended than to the rest—a clever man, and a plausible man; and, moreover, not ill received by the Amer-shams. He had a high white forehead, and crisp black hair, and a goodish nose, and sly grey eyes, with arched black brows over

them ; and he had teeth which he thought he might upon every suitable, or even unsuitable occasion show ; and he could talk, and he could laugh, and he could sing.

This made him agreeable to Mrs. Amersham.

Then he was a sportsman of much pretension—had flushed two woodcocks together, and killed them both—never missed his double shot in ordinary matters. As for fishing, show him a trout that had been basking and rubbing his white waistcoat on the gravel, and correspondently wagging his tail in a river for the last seven years—he would have him out, *nolens volens*, in half a minute's time. Then for hunting,—fences, ditches, double ditches, stone walls, five-barred gates, and all the rest of it, were mere trifles ; together with other accomplishments in coursing, badger-baiting, ferreting, &c. And all this, made him extremely agreeable to Mr. Amersham.

But, asks the reader, what made him agreeable to the gentle Jenny Bruff?

Why, the reader shall know. Miles Blackmore, Esq.—such were his name and description—had, besides the certain knacks and trickeries already described, a power far superior to powers ordinarily possessed by the inveterate out-and-out sportsman—that of accommodating himself marvellously well to the society in which he mixed ; of adapting himself to its manners and customs, and of gaining wherever he went the reputation of being “a very delightful person.”

It is unquestionably true that Jane Bruff exhibited no decided inclination to record her dissent from this general *dictum*. She listened to his conversation with interest, and to his songs with pleasure ; for, uncongenial as might be the pursuits of the field, and their incidental and inevitable cruelties, to a mind so full of tenderness as hers, it would be disingenuous to deny, that she felt less pity for a woodcock killed by Miles Blackmore at a long shot, than she would for any meaner bird slaughtered by some bungling hand : and as to her sympathy for the sufferings of a “poor innocent fish,” struggling with all its power for emancipation from the hook which was tearing its mouth to pieces—truth bids me confess that it was overcome by the pleasure she felt in hearing Amersham describe the skill and dexterity with which Miles landed his trout after more than an hour's “play.”

“Jane,” said Mrs. Amersham to the young lady, one day, after the party had started for the field, “I have made a discovery—a very important discovery too, and that of something concerning yourself, but which with all your discernment you have not yet found out.”

“What in the name of wonder, may *that* be ?” said Miss Bruff.

“You will some fine morning be made aware of it, dearest,” answered Mrs. Amersham, “and perhaps will be at first very much surprised at it ; but then, Jane, it will be too late.”

"I am still in the dark," said the young lady.

"Well then," said Mrs. Amersham, "I will enlighten you in even words—you are in love with Miles Blackmore."

"Emma, my dear Emma!" said Jane colouring crimson, "what are you talking about?"

"Oh, nothing," said Mrs. Amersham, "nothing in the world, but that which seems exceedingly natural, and in my eyes, at least, not particularly blameable."

"But *do* tell me," said Jane, "what have I done—how have I behaved—what have I said, to induce your belief of that which really has no foundation?"

"You have done nothing," said Mrs. Amersham, "you have said nothing to induce that belief; on the contrary, as far as Mr. Blackmore is concerned, you say less to him than to any body else. As for your behaviour, you seem under more restraint when you *do* talk to him than when you talk to any body else; you always avoid him when there seems a probability of your being left alone with him, even for a moment; nay, sometimes I could almost be angry with you for the way in which you cut him short, when he addresses himself particularly to *you*, and abruptly turn the conversation to some subject which must inevitably become general."

"There now," said Jane, "that *is* the case; and is there any thing in *that* like being in love with him?"

"A very great deal indeed, my dear," said Mrs. Amersham. "Why should you not listen to what Mr. Blackmore has to say, with the ease and unreserve with which you listen to George Gray, or Francis Belmore, or any other of the men who are here? Why shrink from a stroll in the grounds with Blackmore, and not hesitate to take the arm of Charles Harvey for a ramble? Why invariably walk out of a room by one door the moment he walks in at another, and yet immediately afterwards volunteer to exhibit your skill at billiards in a contest with Colonel Strickland?"

"Why, because," said Jane, "because—I—"

Because," said Mrs. Amersham, "you feel differently towards him. If he did *not* interest you more than any of the others I have mentioned, why treat him differently—why exhibit towards him a diffidence and coldness, which never affect you upon other occasions? I ask you why, and I will tell you why—it is for fear that he should discover the impression he has made upon you, and the influence he possesses over you."

"On the contrary," said Jane, "I studiously avoid him."

"I have told you so," said Mrs. Amersham; "you want, my dear girl, to personify indifference, but you overact your part."

"No," said Jane, "I certainly think Mr. Blackmore an exceedingly agreeable person—he is remarkably good-humoured."

"And good-looking, Jane?" said Mrs. Amersham.

"For personal appearance in a man I care nothing," said Jane, "that you know—so there you may spare me. I like to listen to his singing."

"And to his conversation, Jane?" said Mrs. Amersham.

"Yes," replied Jane, "and to his conversation. He has seen a great deal of the world and society, and tells what he knows of them well and agreeably; and I see no harm in being informed and instructed."

"None—none in the least," said Mrs. Amersham; "nor do I see any harm in any part of the business—under your circumstances, with an ample fortune, in point of fact, at your command;—for I presume, without some great imprudence on your part, as might regard the choice of a husband, of which I certainly do not suspect you, and which, in the case of which we are speaking, would most assuredly not be displayed, papa would not hesitate to give his consent."

"My dear Mrs. Amersham," said Jane, "what my father would do, or how he would act towards me under ~~my~~ circumstances, involving so serious a step as my marriage, I cannot form the smallest conjecture. That he wishes me out of his way I really believe; and therefore I should not be surprised at his acceding to any tolerably-reasonable proposition which might produce the desired effect. However, rely upon it, I am not likely to try the experiment, most especially in (as you say) 'the case we are now speaking of.' Mr. Miles Blackmore is, as I have already said, an exceedingly agreeable person, and I—"

"There, my dear, there," said Mrs. Amersham, "do not exert yourself so heroically in the denial; go your own way; only if you really do not feel something more than common-place friendship for him let him be aware of the nature of your preference; for at present my belief is, that he is very much in love with *you*, and flatters himself that his affection is not entirely unrequited."

"If men choose to be vain and conceited, how can I help *that*?" said Jane.

"If women choose to be coquettish and tormenting, how can he help *that*?" answered Mrs. Amersham.

"I am neither tormenting nor coquettish," replied Jane; "and if there is a difference in my manner towards him from my manner to other people, it is assumed, because I wish to discourage his particular attentions."

"Poor dear girl!" said Mrs. Amersham, "you are very much to be pitied: first of all you deny that you are in love with a gentleman who is in love with *you*; then you deny that he *is* in love with *you*; and then wind up the history by confessing that you know he *is* in love with *you*, and therefore exhibit to him the most unequivocal signs of diffidence and alarm, in order to repress his attentions. And yet, Jane, with all this, you listen to him with mute attention when he talks, and look at him whenever

you think his eyes are turned another way, with an expression of interest which never shows itself towards any other of the cooed animals of our party."

"Surely, my dear Emma," said Jane, "one may listen to agreeable conversation, or sweet singing, without being in love. You might as well say I was in love with an artist I admire, and whose talents I worship, or charge me with the loss of my heart to a statesman whose speeches I read with enthusiastic delight."

"All this is excellent reasoning, Jane," said Emma; "but there is a certain something—an outward token of what is fancied to be a hidden feeling—which no eloquence can gainsay, no argument overcome. And remember, dear, that the unconsciousness of that deciding 'look,' is the strongest possible proof of its value and importance. My dear child, I know more of the world than you do, and I know—"

"Oh, dear Emma," said the charming Jane, "you are indeed an oracle—a venerable matron—some six or seven years my senior; but rely upon it you are wrong—wrong—wrong. I have never yet seen the man who could interest me so far as to make me think what my father would say, if I mentioned a preference. To that kind, strange, cruel, affectionate, and violent father, all my feelings are deferred; and depend upon it, my dear friend, so long as he does not force me to marry somebody I can *not* love, I will not trouble him by presenting to him any body whom I fancy I *can*."

Strange to be sure it was—but strange things will happen—that this dialogue should have taken place on the very day, the identical day, upon which the gallant and exceedingly disagreeable colonel had written the following letter to his very delightful Jane—or, as *he* called her, Jenny—which, by the way, is printed and published in the dictionaries as an "*abbreviation*" of the former monosyllabic appellation:—

"Harley Street, Friday.

"Dear Jenny,—Whenever I make a promise I like to keep it—sometimes we cannot do exactly what we like—I promised that you should stay with our good friends till the autumn—that must not be, inasmuch as I want you in town.

"I shall send the carriage off this evening, so as to bring you up to-morrow. Give my kind regards to the Amershams, and tell them that if they will come, too, I shall be glad to see them.—I do not wait for your answer before I send for you, because the only answer I expect is your personal appearance.—Your affectionate,

"ALEX. BRUFF."

"Now what can *this* mean?" said Jane to herself, when she had read this brief "*order*" for change of quarters. "Is it possible that what I have more than once seriously apprehended, is really going to take place, and that my father has been deluded

or betrayed into the rashness and cruelty of exalting his servant into the character of mother-in-law to his daughter? It must be something deciding and important that can have induced such a peremptory command."

"Dear Emma," exclaimed the agitated girl, as Mrs. Amersham entered the room, "read *that*, and tell me what you think it means."

Mrs. Amersham did as she was asked to do, and having concluded the perusal of the dispatch, declared her incapability of comprehending its object, and contented herself by proclaiming the utter impossibility of obedience to its commands.

"Oh! yes, yes," said Jane, "I must go—"

"Go!" said Mrs. Amersham. "What, when the gayest ball of our county and season is fixed for Monday? when I have your father's written promise that we are to have you here till September? No, no, I shall settle *that*, my dear love—I will write to him and tell him—"

"No, no," said Jane, "It is my duty to go, and go I must. Besides, the carriage will be down this evening to carry me off in the morning."

"But it can be driven back without you," said M. Amer-sham.

"No!" said Jane, "that must not be. Besides, even if I could make up my mind to consent to your kind proceeding, I should be wretched: first, in the fear of my father's anger;—and you, who have sometimes seen him angry, can pretty well judge how it must affect *me*;—then, in the thought that I was opposing his will, which ought to be law to his daughter; and, moreover, in the suspense in which I should exist as to the true and real cause and object of my sudden recall from the only place in the world where I am truly happy."

Strange to say, the same thought flashed into Mrs. Amersham's mind as had just before startled and alarmed Jane. She thought it savoured of a marriage between the gallant and disagreeable officer, and the sly, mischievous, and influential woman, whose ulterior object nobody, aware of the state of the case, could doubt, and whose artfulness and insidiousness seemed exceedingly well calculated for its attainment.

Little did the ladies anticipate the real motives of the colonel—little did Jane think that within an hour of her fervent hope, that let what might happen, as to her father's refusal of his consent to a lover favoured by *her*, he would never force her to accept a lover whose affections she could not reciprocate—a mandate so ominous and so awful as this brief letter would arrive.

"Jane," said the matron, after a few moments' consideration, "it strikes me, that whether that odious woman, Smylar, is connected with this summons or not, there must be a lover in the question—and I am not sorry for it."

"Not sorry to lose me?" said Jane; "not sorry to have me tormented?"

"No, not a bit sorry, Jane," said Emma; "you ought to be tormented a little, because, to return to the old subject, you delight in tormenting others; and, moreover, you dear conceited little thing, it will drive you into a determination about Miles Blackmore."

"Miles Blackmore!" said Jane. "What, Miles Blackmore again? Indeed, indeed, I shall be angry—yes, you need not look so much surprised, Emma—I shall be really, truly, and seriously angry if you ever make another allusion to the subject."

"Ha! ha!" said Mrs. Amersham, "*then* is it indeed more serious than I thought it. Angry are you? Come, come, Jane, I own I am interested in his fate—perhaps he has made me a *confidante*—don't break his heart—don't go before our ball."

"Emma," said Jane, looking infinitely more serious than she usually did, "do consider the reflection you cast upon my conduct, and even my character, by not only implying, but by charging me with deliberate coquetry and missishness in my conduct towards this man. Surely, surely, unless the world is much more wicked than I have yet learned to think it, a young woman, admiring genius when she finds it, and appreciating talent where it exists, may so far gratify an innocent, and not even questionable taste, by enjoying the conversation of the man whose intellectual qualities she respects and esteems. I do deny, Emma, solemnly deny, the existence of any feeling of regard towards Mr. Blackmore, which might not exist between us were he my brother. I plead guilty—positively guilty to liking him exceedingly, and being very happy in his society, and even admiring him, if you will; but as to love, if love be what the poets tell us of it, and about which, my dear friend, you must, of course, know a great deal more than I do, I, with equal sincerity, truth, and firmness, plead *not guilty*."

"Well," said Mrs. Amersham, "I shall press you to no further confession; but I must, if you please, refer the history of your departure to my excellent husband, who, I think, will agree with me, that an embargo must be laid upon you."

"That is out of the question," said Jane. "Profiting by your good advice, and by that which probably is more effective, your good example, I have learned obedience, and go I must. But if you love me, do what my father asks you to do—go up to town with me; then I shall have your society, your advice, your sympathy."

"That dear child," said Mrs. Amersham, "is wholly out of the question; our house is already half full, and we expect the Durntons and the Slaters, and half the country to come to us tomorrow, for *the ball*."

"Then must I wend my weary way alone," said Jane.

"Well," said Mrs. Amersham, "as you are resolved, I cannot

deny that you are right; whatever freak or fancy your father may have taken into his head, it is, as you so properly say, your duty to obey; therefore I must be silent; but when my dear George comes to know it, I am certain he will be furious; and as for poor Miles Blackmore—”

“Emma,” interrupted Jane, colouring deeply, whether with consciousness, anger, or any other feeling or passion, it is not for us to determine—“pray, pray do not.”

The appeal so genuine, so earnest, and coming from a pair of lips, to which the most eloquent heroine-describers would be puzzled to do justice, accompanied by a playful gesture of intimidation, silenced her companion, more especially as “dear George,” and Mr. Miles Blackmore at that precise moment made their appearance.

The moment the beaux were informed of the gallant colonel’s mandate, with the “*nil describas, attamen ipsa veni*” clause in the dispatch, they both, as must naturally be expected, burst into the loudest denunciation of the paternal tyranny. Mr. Amersham vowed that he would himself go up to town with Jane, and force her imperious parent to permit her to return—a proposition which seemed by no means agreeable to his lady-wife, and infinitely less palatable to Mr. Miles Blackmore.

“No, no,” said Jane, “rely upon it I am the best judge of what I ought to do. My father is, as you know, cross, turbulent, and angry, and snubs me, and scolds me; thinks me a foolish girl, and calls me so; charges me with being ill-tempered, and with all sorts of enormities; but I am bound by the most sacred ties to filial obedience. Don’t think I am preaching—I speak exactly what I feel—so go I must, dearest friends, and go I will!”

“And when to return, Miss Bruff?” said Mr. Miles Blackmore, in a tone of greater earnestness than he was accustomed to assume.

“Oh,” said Jane, her heart full of anxiety and wretchedness as to the real object of her summons, “I suppose in a day or two. Most probably I shall be back for the ball, because papa can’t want me to stay long in town.”

And then again her thoughts reverted to the hateful, dreaded degradation which she fancied her father must be involved in, as she seriously dreaded his surrender to the fascinations of the well-painted, black ringleted siren of his household.

A girl like Jane Bruff, in a country-house, is like a bright star in the firmament. A well-educated accomplished creature of her age, sufficiently of the world to understand its usages, and so thoroughly well-bred as to be perfectly unaffected—showing by every word and action a disposition the most amiable, a general desire to please without the slightest effort or strain after popularity—kind and goodnatured to all, without difference or distinction—wholly divested of the absurd squeamishness which under-bred misses think fine—ready at all times, and on all occa-

sions, to join, frankly and freely, in whatever is going on, conscious of the purity of her own heart and mind, and equally confident in the genuine feelings of friendship and affection of those with whom she is associated—such a girl becomes essential and indispensable to the happiness and pleasure of such a circle. Where is there upon the face of the earth to be found a being so charming, so winning, so influential, as a young Englishwoman of this class and character?

The moment it was known that the carriage had actually arrived, and that Jane Bruff was positively to leave the Amershams in the morning, a gloom fell over the evening circle; her gayest song sounded like a dirge; her sweetest smiles, subdued by the thought of the morrow, was watched with painful interest by those who had scarcely approached her, till they were on the eve of losing her. Nor, amongst those who gazed upon her sweet countenance (perhaps for the last time), was Miles Blackmore the least affected.

To hearts that keenly feel, the most trifling incidents are sometimes the most deeply affecting; and when the gentle, genuine Jane, carefully covered up the harp

“She used to touch,”

there was something in the doing it, that involved a leave-taking which brought tears into more eyes than those of one of the party.

If Jane Bruff had not been by a thousand degrees as charming as she was, her very position in the world could not have failed to make her an object of deep and thrilling interest. It was once well said to me, by a most accomplished nobleman, whose personal and mental qualities could not fail to command the regard and esteem of men, and the admiration and affection of women, that, placed as he was in an enviable position in life, with high rank and large fortune, he felt dissident of himself, and doubtful whether the favourable reception he every where met with, from the *belles* of the season, arose from their appreciation of his personal qualifications, or the Earldom and fortune which he possessed.

Certain it is, that Jane Bruff's father, and Jane Bruff's fortune, damped the ardour of several admirers, who, long before the period of which we are now treating, would, as the dowagers say, have “come forward.” But Love is careless of gold; and he that had nothing himself to offer, did not venture to aspire to the wealth of the heiress, assured of a rejection from the gallant dragon (not dragoon) who watched with the most assiduous care and vigilance, the golden apples he had gathered during his profitable campaigns.

How much happiness in this world is marred by some slight obstacle, which after all might, perhaps, by a little explanation, have been easily overcome. But as Love is not mercenary, so is it timid; and the feeling which induced the noble earl just men-

mentioned to doubt whether he was loved for himself alone, had sealed the lips of many a man who, poor himself, feared that our gentle Jane would think him an interested wooer.

Of this class Mr. Miles Blackmore certainly was not one. As we have already heard, he was a gentleman and a man of fortune. He certainly neither had a title nor the remotest expectation of one; and as rank was a great point with Sandy Bruff, he might have met with a repulse. But—why not try! If he loved Jane, we know she *liked* him. Why not, while yet her foot was on the threshold, prefer his suit? Why not avow himself?

Jane was sufficiently aware of the temper of his mind to expect, and even to dread the event. His manner was *distract*. He was evidently agitated—excited.—He begged her to sing once again the song he loved so much. She unhesitatingly complied—it was her nature to oblige. The words were of parting—of a desponding lover. Still she repeated it firmly and steadily, although Mrs. Amersham's look was fixed upon her countenance.

When it was ended, the party except Miles Blackmore, were loud in their applauses. He rose from his chair, and walked to the windows which opened into the conservatory. He did not return for some time, when he did, he looked pale and disturbed—the very reverse of the picture of healthful gaiety, which till this evening his countenance had exhibited.

A slight repast brought the evening's recreation to a close. Nobody tasted any of the accustomed supper which, till to-night, had served to collect the guests about the sociable round table, and gave, as it were, the tone to playful conversation, and that agreeable sort of foolery, which wisdom frowns at, as being "very frivolous," and vulgarity condemns as being "exceedingly low."

When Mrs. Amersham and Jane retired, a host of inquiries assailed the ears of the latter, as to when she was to go,—that is to say, if she *must* go; and then came a discussion, somewhat energetic as to the positive humanity of letting the paternal horses rest at least till after luncheon—if she got to town by dinner-time she would do quite well—the colonel could not expect her earlier; and, then what was the use of going sooner? and so on. During all these discussions and exclamations Miles Blackmore stood in a dark recess of the hall, watching the charming girl, who (*why*, after her ingenuous declaration of perfect indifference about him to Mrs. Amersham, we could not, if we did not know something about what girls are made of, guess) was excessively surprised to miss the said Miles Blackmore from the little circle of petitioners who were so earnest in praying her not to go away immediately after breakfast.

Miles Blackmore waited till she had given her consent to stay; and, after all the rest of the party had shaken hands with her, he came forth and took his leave, shaking hands with her too. He might have pressed the hand he took. If he did, the pressure

certainly was not returned. But mark!—she is not to go till after luncheon..

CHAPTER IV.

“WELL, Smylar,” said Colonel Alexander Bruff to his Circcean *aide*, “Jenny will be home to-day—eh! She does not think, perhaps, what we have got in store for her. She is a foolish, poking, blushing thing, with no more idea of the world than a babbhy.”

“I am not quite so sure of that, Colonel,” said Mrs. Smylar. “Miss Jane is quiet and gentle in manner and behaviour, ‘especially before *you*; but I have seen a good deal of the world one way and another, and I think those meek young ladies before company, are not always the steadiest. You know the proverb, colonel, ‘the deepest stream runs quietest.’”

“That ‘ll do—that ‘ll do,” said the colonel; “therefore, and in that case, the sooner we settle her the better—that is, if George will take her. Who knows? It doesn’t strike me that she is likely to catch many people. She is so shy—so silly—so—eh—not a word to say, Smylar.”

“*You* know her less than any body,” said Smylar. “If you only could hear how she talks to *me*, when you are away, you wouldn’t think it was the same person. Somehow, colonel, I don’t know what you have done, or how you have frightened her, but she *is* afraid of you. The minute you go, she becomes what I should call unstarched. Just the same as a lady I once lived with, whose husband was as jealous a green-eyed monster as ever lived. When *he* was present, there she sat, poor thing, bolt upright, like a maypole in muslin, with downcast eyes and screwed-up mouth, which, as the saying goes, was made to look as if butter wouldn’t melt in it. The moment my master retired, the ice thawed; smiles lighted up her intelligent countenance, and she seemed perfectly at her ease, just as if she had got rid of the nightmare.

“That ‘ll do, Mrs. Smylar,” said the colonel. “So you compare me with a nightmare, eh?”

“On the contrary, sir,” said Mrs. Smylar, “if the newspapers speak truly, you are more likely soon to become a Knight Commander.”

“That ‘ll do—that ‘ll do,” said Bruff, “I believe the newspapers are right, and you are deuced sharp and quick, and know the world a great deal more than I do—upon my life I think so—and I am sure you know more of the character and disposition of my child than I do—eh? She is all shamabram and humbug before me—so meek and so modest and so mild—and then, as *you* say,

when my back is turn'd, chatters away like a bird-clapper in a cherry-tree, and does what she calls thinking for herself."

"That's true enough," said Smylar.

"Why don't you sit down, Smylar?" said the colonel.

"Why sir, I—perhaps—"

"Do as I order you, Smylar—who cares if they do come in?" said the colonel. "I haven't I a right to do as I like in my own house? Besides, you must obey orders; so down with you."

Mrs. Smylar seated herself.

"That 'll do—that 'll do," said the colonel. "Now go on—you were saying something about Jenny's thinking for herself."

"I was, colonel," said Mrs. Smylar, "and perhaps if you don't exercise a little of your authority shortly, she may *choose* for herself, and then there *would* be a pretty business."

"Business—business, do you call it?" said the colonel. "I'd cut off her legs if she dared to think of such a thing."

"If you did, colonel," said Mrs. Smylar, "she would emulate the heroes of your cloth, and fight upon her stumps."

"That 'll do—that 'll do, Smylar," said the colonel, tickled exceedingly by the facetious, yet as he thought complimentary allusion to military valour, "I'd be bound for it she would; but she couldn't so well run away."

"I think, colonel," continued the insinuating siren, "that the course you have adopted is the very wisest in the world. What can she want more, than a finished gentleman, with a fine person and a title. To be sure baronetcies are not much nowadays. Why colonel, you buy your candles of one baronet; you have left off dealing for your writing-paper with another; you have quarrelled with your brewer for buying his drugs from a third; and you have in your gin for the servants' hall from a fourth; so being my lady in that way isn't much."

"That 'll do," said the colonel, "you have hit the mark, but keep that to yourself; things always find the ir level. Grindle is a baronet of 1682—that 'll do—gad you see things in a minute. What do you think of the fact, Smylar, that the same appellation which devolves upon a hero who has risked his life a hundred times over, is covered with wounds, and has lost a limb or two in the service of his country, is neither more nor less better nor worse, than that bestowed upon a lottery-office-keeper, or a madhouse-keeper, or any shopkeeper you like, who happens to go up to court with an address upon some auspicious occasion as it is called—the only campaign in which he has ever engaged being a march from Guildhall to St. James's?"

"I don't wonder at your indignation," said the accommodating Smylar; "there should be some distinction made in the tide which, as I began by saying, puts the oldest baronet upon a footing, at least in a newspaper paragraph, with the last be-knighted booby of the tagrag and bobtail."

"That 'll do, Smylar," said the colonel, "and it is all very well here, snug and tiled as we masons say, But don't indulge in this sort of talk to Jenny. My idea is that the match is a great one for her. Persuade her to it by all means, my dear Smylar—paint George Grindle perfection—you have never seen him—but that don't matter—when you are zealous I know your power to be serviceable to us. He is fair, with curly hair, and a long nose—that will guide you as to how to describe his features. His figure is uncommon genteel, and if I had him at drill for a fortnight, I could set him up remarkably well. But never mind his face or his figure—talk of his fortune, his place and station, and instead of running down the baronetcy, make it out as a title of nobility. Why, when carriages are called up, Lady Grindle, the baronet's wife, sounds as well as Lady Stonchenge, the oldest countess extant. In fact, Smylar, I rely upon you entirely."

"But, sir," said Smylar, "suppose she should have anticipated your choice?"

"Can't—can't have done any such thing," said the colonel. "How should she?—never could have dreamt of it—never dreamt of it myself three days ago."

"You misunderstand me," said Smylar, "I don't mean that she has anticipated your choice of this particular lover; but suppose she should have anticipated your choice by having, as I ventured just now to fancy possible, given her heart to somebody else?"

"Her heart," said the colonel, "what's that? Give her heart without my leave and licence? that 'll do—that 'll do, Smylar—you are getting silly. No, no, she hasn't spirit enough to be disobedient; and if she had, what then? She may give her heart as you call it, and a pretty gift it would be. Her hand holds the money, Smylar, and *that* she cannot give without my consent. So now no tampering with her, or asking her questions, or hearing any of her nonsense. She is to marry George Grindle. She knows nearly as much of him at this minute as I do. Persuade her that he is an Adonis, and convince her that he is a very great man—soothe her with promises of my affection beyond measure if she gives in to the scheme, and alarm her with threats of my severest anger if she resists."

"It would be much easier for me to do all this if I had seen Mr. Grindle myself," said Mrs. Smylar, who seemed to think that she might as well make friends with the affianced husband, since such he appeared to be.

"Oh," said the colonel, "you'll see enough of him soon: he is to dine here on Monday with his father; quite an unexpected meeting for Jane; and before that, the less you say the better on the subject—indeed nothing will be best. She will merely receive them as ordinary visitors, and you can take the opportunity of acquainting yourself with the personal qualities of the,

young heir—a mighty fine gentleman, as I think, although I must say I was not in his company more than ten minutes, yesterday afternoon."

"I understand, colonel," said Mrs. Smylar, "I am not to know why Miss Jane has been sent for—that is right—because, while she is at dinner with you, I can avail myself of the opportunity of talking with Miss Harris, her maid, who ten to one, under the influence of my kindness, in giving her coffee and a *chasse* in my room, will let out some little history of the proceedings at Mrs. Amersham's, from which I can gather the state of our young lady's feelings and prepossessions connected with the party there. Of the result, colonel, of course you will be informed."

"That'll do—that'll do," said the Colonel. "Come, come, Smylar, one glass of good claret will do you no harm, and I am so seldom at home, that when I am, it is absolutely necessary you should help me to finish my bottle."

"But suppose, colonel—"

"That'll do—that'll do," said Sandy, "who cares what people suppose—eh?"

"No, colonel, of course to *you* it is nothing," said Mrs. Smylar, "but I—I, you know, have nothing but my good character to live upon, and really the constant apprehension which I labour under, lest it should seem that I am too much in your confidence, and too constantly with you—"

"That'll do," said the colonel, "finish your wine and go, and mind what I have said—all will be right if Jenny marries this man—it will settle *her* and make *me* happy; but if it fails—if she refuses, she shall see how an angry and injured father *can* act."

"Trust to me, colonel," said Mrs. Smylar, "to do my best to forward your excellent paternal intentions; only consider that I do run a risk in putting myself so forward; and the first people of your acquaintance to find fault would be those Amershams, of whom Jane is so fond."

It is scarcely necessary to point out the free-and-easy manner, in which Mrs. Smylar talked to the colonel of "Jane," and the "Amersham's;" but it may be as well to notice it, lest the style might be supposed to be that of the narrator rather than the "performer."

"That'll do—that'll do," said the colonel, "never mind them—you remain faithful to my interests in this affair, as you have in all others, and you may snap your fingers at my *dear* friends, the Amershams, and at all my other dear friends; and if you catch them in a conspiracy to thwart *me*, and if they succeed, Miss Jenny will go the same way."

Here, at the suggestion of Mrs. Smylar, the conference ended; and after her departure, the gallant and disagreeable colonel rang his bell for coffee, which was accordingly brought; and nobody, from the appearance of the distinguished officer, would have

imagined it possible that any dialogue, like that which has just been detailed, had occurred in the *sanctum* in which he had dined (Smylar having with her intuitive caution and *prévoyance* rinsed the glass from which she had sipped her château margot) had it not unfortunately happened that a small patch of court-plaster which had entered the room on Smylar's upper lip, made its appearance when the butler brought in the coffee, upon the under lip of the gallant colonel; an exchange which, however remarkable, possessed certainly more of a civil than a military character. Whatever the cause might have been, the circumstance had no effect upon the servant, who did his duty and retired.

And now what was the colonel to do, in order to kill time, as he said; a thing the most desirable no doubt, to a veteran, who finds the old gentleman with the forelock (or as the worthy Mrs. Rambottom calls it, firelock) running away so exceedingly fast as he proverbially does run, and still the faster as he nears the bottom of the hill? Should he go to the Doldrum?—a worthy, excellent association, as every body knows, but at which evening society is scarce. In fact, it is an established truth, that where there is no play—not what the world calls gaming, but card-playing—nobody can expect an evening *réunion* at a club. At the Doldrum, the coffee-room (as the dining-room of a club is universally called, it being the room in which, except as a tail to one's dinner, coffee is never taken) was by ten o'clock at night as dark as Erebus, and as still and gloomy as if Trophonius were house-steward of the establishment; the waiters being instructed to diminish (for economy's sake) the number of lamps by which it was earlier in the day enlightened, at the rate of from six to one,—thus reducing any kind of refreshment which after a prescribed hour in the afternoon might be required by members who venture to dine late or sup early, to a mere matter of taste and feeling—ocular demonstration being wholly out of the question; much to the disparagement, as a punster would say, of the ancient proverb (somewhat musty) touching the advantage of *light* suppers.

The Doldrum, however, possessed all the advantages of fine rooms, and every thing else that should seem to conduce to sociability and that interesting exchange of sentiment and opinion, and all that sort of thing, which to people who are rich and sentimental, and have none of the cares and worries of every day life to annoy and agitate them, is no doubt exceedingly agreeable. But no—a dead solemn silence prevailed throughout the rooms in the evening, and the objects most probably presented to view were,—one man dozing over a book at the side of one fireplace, another man fast asleep over another book at another fireplace; two men equally lost in slumber, one on either side of a table (the books having fallen from their hands), and another gentlemen awake, turning over a file of last month's newspapers.

In the library, the same dead solemn stillness reigned. There,

at the farthest possible distance from each other, sat the bitterest enemies, advocates of two different systems, culling extracts from huge volumes till their eyes ached, each unconscious of the object of his fellow Doldrumite;—one, he that had the worst of it, imbibing, regardless of expense, a glass of cold water; and he that would probably eventually triumph in the contest, having disbursed sixpence for a cup of tea (toast, butter, sugar, cream, &c.) whic' by dint of enterprising speculation, and a small jug of hot water, he had diluted into two.

The late Lord Dudley, whose superior qualities of mind, and powers of expressing his thoughts, were overlaid and lost by a manner in society which gave him an air of frivolity and even weakness, but which proved too truly (as those who best knew him, always thought and feared) a constitutional malady, under which he at last sunk; in one of his letters to his most-esteemed and highly gifted friend, the Bishop of Llandaff, describes the Alfred club—a club which some quarter of a century since, clubs being at that time (at least the Alfred class of clubs) rarities, was much distinguished—in these words.

"I am glad you mean to come into the Alfred this time. We are the most abused and most envied, most laughed at and most canvassed society, that I know of, and we deserve neither the one nor the other distinction. The club is not so great a resource as so many respectable persons believe, nor are we by any means such quizzes or such bores as the wags pretend. I have passed many *quiet comfortable hours* there. I perhaps have not been very much amused, but I never was in the smallest degree annoyed."

This negative praise might justly have been appropriated to the Doldrum, only that as the numbers of the Doldrum exceeded considerably those of the Alfred (or, as "the wags" called it, the "half-read"), the bores naturally bore an equal proportion to the community, and were consequently more numerous. To Sandy Bruff, who himself was Princeps Borcorum, there could be little attraction at the Doldrum. Still, when a man is about to take a deciding step in his family affairs, and has not within him the quality of thinking matters over by himself, the very consideration of the subject makes him restless; and so the colonel rang the bell, imparted the intention to his servant of walking forth, and having enveloped himself in his cloak, began his march on foot, because exercise was sure to do him good.

During his progress towards the club, what was Mrs. Smylar about?—not bodily but mentally—what were her views and opinions touching the proposed alliance between Miss Bruff—"our Jane," as she permitted herself, or rather was permitted by the colonel to call her—and the elder son of the baronet? It does not appear possible for us yet to divine. She has admitted that she proposes to examine and cross-examine Miss Harris, as to the state of her young lady's heart, and take measures in ac-

cordance with the knowledge she derives from the process of extraction; but neither we, nor the gallant and disagreeable colonel, can be at all prepared for the course which she may propose to adopt when she has gained her information. One thing ought, however, to be kept constantly in mind: the object nearest and dearest the heart of this designing woman; which was, as we must all be aware by this time, to become, *coute qui coute* (or, as people liberally translate it, by Hook or by Crook), Mrs. Colonel Bruff.

Establishing this as the fact, the only doubt as to Mrs. Smylar's future conduct arises on the question as to what she may consider the likeliest means of achieving her great end, or rather her great beginning, as far as the stage of real life is concerned. If ever there *did* exist a Mr. Smylar, he had long since been called to his fathers; but those who remembered our dapper housekeeper in her bloom, recollect little more than her transition to Mistress Smylar from Miss Stote—a change which, as the scandal of a provincial greenroom went, occurred almost imperceptibly, just previous to her paying a month's visit to her aunt twenty miles off, from which she returned considerably reduced by the illness under which she had laboured, but from which she eventually recovered.

That this vivacious gentlewoman would be at all scrupulous or delicate in her proceedings, nobody can expect. In flattering Sandy to the highest pitch of fulsomeness, she felt certain of success. The language of deference and approbation, amounting almost to admiration, was as agreeable as it was strange to his ears; he grew happy on her praise, and looking back upon his past life, began to think either that the rest of the world were vastly inferior to Mrs. Smylar, in the perception and appreciation of talent, or that his own qualities, like those of wine, had improved proportionably with his age.

Swift sets down flattery as an instance of ill manners; because, if you flatter all the company, you please none; if you flatter only one or two, you affront the rest. The flattery with which Mrs. Smylar had won the affections of Colonel Bruff, was not obnoxious to these objections—it could never be practised except when they were *tête-à-tête*. Besides, it must be confessed that the moppet had tact; and in all her advances towards the heart of the hero, she proved herself an exceedingly skilful engineer. Nothing offensive—nothing ludicrous—nothing positively unswallowable was presented to his appetite for laudation; her respect and admiration were implied rather than expressed; she carried on her works cautiously and systematically, forming her parallels, and advancing her trenches, under cover of a battery of two eyes, which she never intended should slacken their fire, till she considered the breach in the colonel's heart practicable.

But meanwhile, perhaps, we ought to cast a look towards Jane. The morning has already dawned, the bright sun is high, and the

sweet birds are singing round her window, as if in mockery of her sorrow—at least so she felt it. The very fact of quitting a house which was more to her than home, would at any time have caused a pang; but upon this occasion her too-justly formed suspicions that something more than ordinarily trying was at hand, excited, beyond the negative feeling of not liking to quit the Amershams, a positive dread of proceeding to town. Still the course was straight and plain—a duty was to be performed, and performed it must, it should be.

And now that we are invisibly present in her dressing-room, and unsuspectedly possessed of her inmost thoughts, let us see whether, in all the regrets she endured, or rather in the one great regret which oppressed her, the separation from Miles Blackmore had any share? We are now in her confidence, although she thinks alone, or even speaks to herself. The answer is “Yes”—but only in the degree to which she has already confessed and admitted to Emma Amersham. Jane was all candour—all truth; and if she had felt more than a friendly affection for Blackmore, why should she conceal the truth from Emma Amersham?—then *why* make the distinction, the remarkable distinction in her manner towards him—a distinction “with a difference” from that which she observed towards every other man of the party?

Why should we doubt that it was the result of an anxiety to prevent his pursuing what she felt would be an unavailing course, and to discourage (which she might have apprehended) a declaration that, according to the rules of society, must have abruptly terminated their agreeable family intercourse.

There might have been some other reason. Whether there were or not, it would be hypocrisy to deny that when Jane Bruff left her room, it was not with her usual mildness and calmness; nor did she complete her journey down stairs towards the breakfast-parlour, until she had ascertained by the sound of voices, that several of the party had assembled there, and that there was no chance of finding herself *tête-à-tête* with Mr. Miles Blackmore.

There are certain persons in what is called the world, who are distinguished as lions: gentlemen afflicted by what those who are secure from the infliction consider enviable—notoriety; a sort of celebrity in a small way, which has rendered their names familiar to the public, and who are talked of by every body, as if every body was their friend, and to whose patronymics nobody would any more think of prefixing the word Mister, than they would of calling Julius Cæsar, General Cæsar, or of speaking of our common parent as Mr. Adam. Of these “lions,” as they are called, it is the fashion for ladies of moderate minds, and second-rate manners, to affect to be “dreadfully afraid.” One lion is so satirical, another lion is so exceedingly refined, and a third lion draws such dreadful caricatures; and so on in their several degrees.—Jane Bruff, like Spenser’s Una in all her

purity and naturalness (as the cockneys call it), was not a lion-drauder, nor, indeed, was Miles Blackmore a lion; but still there was about the otherwise attractive Miles something repellent as regarded Jenny. Yet that she *did* like him we know—we have heard what she said about him—we are bound to believe her; and so for the present, to use the significant phraseology of her gallant and unpleasant parent, “that’ll do.”

Jane ate nothing at breakfast—the want of appetite seemed infectious—Amersham alone threw in provision for the day with his usual alacrity and resolution. All the rest of the party partook more or less of the universal regret at Jane’s abstraction—departure it could scarcely be called.

During the ill-relished meal, Mrs. Amersham, who, as mistress of the house, had established her seat with her back to the huge window, through which the whole blaze of the bright sunshine poured upon the rest of the party, was scarcely less agitated and fluttered than Jane had been when she quitted her room. Knowing, as she pretty well did, the character of Colonel Bruff, and appreciating equally with his daughter the inflexibility of his paternal temper, and almost as much dreading the anger which she was sure he would feel and fulminate upon her, if Jenny’s acquaintance with Miles Blackmore should that day wind up with some serious result (although in discussing the subject with her, she had expressed her real and genuine opinion of his merits), she was kept in a continued and continuous flutter, which was not a little excited by an observation of Amersham’s, after they had retired the previous evening, who (in reply to a half-doubt and half-interrogatory of hers, expressed to him as to the character of Blackmore’s feelings towards Jane, and Jane’s towards him) declared, that knowing Bruff as he did, he wouldn’t have such a thing happen in his house for the world.

Having very frequently expressed an opinion upon the inevitable *gaucherie* and unsociability at breakfast, and the absolute necessity for solitude to make it a comfortable meal, I do not intend here to enlarge upon the discomforts of the present party; but it may be just and right to say, that of all the disagreeable exhibitions of the sort, the one in question was the most unpleasant. Mrs. Amersham could not divest herself of the belief that a *dénouement* must take place before Jane’s departure. Jane felt that she was watched by her dear friend; and Amersham having been put on the *qui vive* by his “better half,” took especial care to beckon Miles Blackmore to his side, in order to prevent any approaches to such a result, and assiduously kept him in earnest conversation—at least as far as his own earnestness was concerned—on the subject of a trout of the most respectable character and appearance, which had been seen the day before by one of the keepers, and which Amersham recommended to the special notice and *immediate* attention of his sporting friend.

The contrarieties and contradictions which exist in the best regulated minds of the best bred and best educated women, are very extraordinary. The declaration of her feelings toward Miles Blackmore, which Jane had made the day before to her friend and hostess, was plain, true, and sincere. We know that whatever had been the reason of her unwillingness to be left alone with him, or indeed to encourage his particular attention or conversation, it was as strong as ever it had been when she came down to breakfast; and yet she was surprised—aye, and disappointed too—to find him late in making his appearance at table, and, when he did arrive, to see him seated far from *her*, and engaged at the side of Amersham in the piscatory conversation which we had just noticed.

It certainly appeared strange, that Miles Blackmore seemed—and if he were acting, he did it remarkably well—to be entirely occupied with the subject proposed to him, and did, what no man in love, unless strategically, would or could do; namely, talk of what his proceedings would be about the trout the next day, if he did not succeed in halting him out after breakfast—the one event involving the period of Jane's departure, and the other pointing to a time when she would be gone.

Amersham took great praise to himself for the way in which he was "playing" his friend; but Mrs. Amersham felt convinced that she had been all along right with regard to Jane's partiality, from watching the result of his success in engrossing to himself all Blackmore's conversation.

The breakfast-party broke up; and while the members of it were standing in groups, listlessly waiting for some "start," and Mrs. Amersham and Jane were agreeing to have an hour's *cause* to themselves before luncheon, Amersham and Blackmore came up to her, both evidently prepared for a speech. Jane was agitated, she scarcely knew why.

"My dear Jane," said Amersham, "you are, I suppose, resolved to leave us to-day?"

"Oh! fixed as fate," said Jane.

"I feel that I ought not to murmur at your decision," said Amersham, "since it is founded upon your own good judgment; but as it must be so, I hate leavetaking even for a few days, to which our loss of you will, I hope, be limited; and so Blackmore (who sympathizes with me) and I, have agreed to make our parting conditional—that is to say, we are going down the river to look after a trout, which is honouring us with a visit, and if we can be back by luncheon-time we will; if not, we will shake hands and say good bye, now."

There was something so odd, so hurried, and so abrupt in Amersham's manner, that Jane was quite startled by it. This he saw and added,

— "Because by this condition we have to look forward to saying good bye again, and if not—"

— “I see,” said Jane, recovering herself, “I understand what you mean—it is not a positive leavetaking—I accept the offer; and so good bye.”

“Good bye, Miss Bruff,” said Miles Blackmore, extending his hand, which she unaffectedly took, “I dare say we *shall* be back before you go.”

“I think not,” said Jane, colouring with something like anger at the quiet arrangement of the affair; “for I believe neither you nor Mr. Amersham ever eat luncheon.”

“Oh?” said Emma, construing Jane’s animation into a “proof as strong as *Holy Writ*” of the justice of all her suspicions, “they will be back, my dear girl—if Mr. Blackmore is not gallant enough to be in time to make his *adieu*, I am sure my husband is.”

Amersham looked rather cross—Blackmore rather foolish: however, the mutual hand-shaking was repeated, and the sportsmen took their leave.

It would probably be unfair, even if it were possible, to detail the dialogue which took place between Mrs. Amersham and Miss Bruff, in the boudoir of the former. The tone of the “matron,” however, was much less austere than that of the maiden; for although she advocated obedience to the colonel in all reasonable measures, she with equal force and energy deprecated a complete subjection to his will, provided his commands involved any thing like the endurance of Mrs. Smylar’s continuance in the same house with his daughter, in the capacity of mother-in-law; and it was to *this* point the thoughts of both ladies were directed; Jane herself being conscious that no human being of their not very extensive acquaintance could have been selected by her father as a suitable match for her, and most assuredly never suspecting that she was to be disposed of, in the way of bargain and barter, to a man whom she had never seen, and in whose name she had never heard; or, indeed, thinking that a man could be found, in the sphere of gentlemen, who would be induced to accept such a condition himself.

Soon, too soon, indeed, as we know, were all these doubts destined to be dispelled, and poor Jane doomed to the infliction of a hateful lover; a calamity which she so specially and sensitively dreaded.

Time flew—luncheon came, and was not eaten—neither Amersham nor Blackmore made his appearance—the clock struck two—punctual to the moment the colonel’s carriage drawn by a pair of veteran horses, of which he was so chary and careful that Mrs. Amersham had nicknamed them Sugar and Spice, was drawn to the door. Miss Harris was already in the rumble, which had been especially fixed to the rear of the vehicle, for the joint accommodation of herself and a man servant—an association which in all probability might lead to a premature development of the colonel’s proposed proceedings—that is to say, if

Mrs. Smylar had condescended to impart the secret to colonel's own man who was supposed to be in her confidence, and fully aware of her influence over his master.

If the reader thinks with Mrs. Amersham and Mr. Blackmore, he will, perhaps, not be displeased at being spared a description of the sweet but sorrowful separation of our heroine—if so she must be—from her affectionate friends. A few minutes over, and the family coach was moving at a reasonable old fashioned pace through the grounds—park it could not be called; and in less than half an hour Jane found herself on the high-road to London, her heart beating and her head aching.

Just as the carriage was ascending a small hill, which commanded a view of the meads through which the pretty rippling river Yarrell runs, she caught sight of Amersham and Blackmore, attended by a keeper and a boy or two, all intent on the sport. She fixed her eyes upon them, as the last objects of interest which were likely to present themselves to her on her road homewards. One of the boys had turned and seen the carriage; he mentioned the fact, and Amersham and his friend instantly saluted the departing fair one. Amersham waved his hat gaily in the air, as if cheering her and encouraging her. Blackmore bowed more quietly, and then stood immovable by the side of his friend, till a turn in the road put an end to the scene.

Jane threw herself back in the carriage and wept—poor thing?

Meanwhile Colonel Bruff and Sir George were by no means inactive in arranging matters connected with their notable project, and, indeed, the more disclosures they mutually made, the more they appeared pleased with the prospect before them.

One person of the party, to do him justice, seemed rather to quail at the awful responsibility, as he before called it, in which the perfection of the arrangement must necessarily involve him. That person was the hero of the drama. But his father, who was even more perilously placed by his favourite son's indiscretions and embarrassments than the son himself, repeated all the arguments he had previously advanced, in order to convince him how essential, not only to his respectability and position, but, in fact, to his existence, the matrimonial measure was; although George could not, as he said, make up his mind at a moment's notice, nor, indeed, finally pledge himself to the completion of the scheme, until he had seen the lady; adding, with a kind of confident anticipation to "the governor," "Nor, perhaps, till she had seen *me* would she be more willing."

"You are mighty particular," said "the governor," "as far as you yourself are concerned, and extremely punctilious as regards the girl; but just listen to reason. Our position is desperate. Bruff is a blockhead. Manage *him*—and he—and he is positive upon the point—will manage his daughter. See her, of course you will. See you, will she; for, having sent for her

from the country, we are invited to dine with him on Monday."

"Monday?" said George, "rather short notice. To be sure the season is wearing out; but the idea of an eight-and-forty hours' invitation, governor, except for a fight, seems short. I hope somebody else will be there—eh?"

"I foresaw your dislike to the *tête-à-tête* system," said Sir George, "and in order to break through the formality, and to set you off well, I got him to invite your brother Frank."

"My half-brother, governor, if you please," said George. "Well, that is something;—but will he go?"

"He has promised," said Sir George,

"And will fulfil his promise," said the son, "unless Mrs. Blouskin, or Professor Tarradiddle, or the marvellous Dr. Bobble-wobble, happens to invite him to some delightful party at which wonders are to be exhibited, tigers to be shown, or mummies unrolled; and then there will be no getting him; and I should like to have somebody on my staff just to break the ice, and keep the thing going—eh, governor?"

"I am sure he will go," said Sir George. "Upon his principle of what he calls morality, and from a feeling of fraternal affection, he would wish to go—just to see how you were about to dispose of your frail tenement, as he calls it; and mark me, George, if he does go, the chances are that he will say grace before dinner."

"I should like, governor, to tell you something," said George, "something connected with this business, which hangs a little on my mind."

"By Jove, George," said the juvenile parent, "I really don't know what you need hesitate to tell me. We live, I think, like friends. You have *your* indiscretions—I have *mine*. I assure you I am exceedingly merciful, and if you don't—"

"Trust me, governor," interrupted George. "I know what you mean. Be quite at your ease on that subject—every man has his own range. No, no, that's not it—but I have—a particular feeling towards a particular person."

"No news to *me*, George," said the worthy baronet; "the bow-window at White's commands enough of town, to show up young gentlemen even more cautious than you are; besides, that affair has been a secret with me these two years."

"Well, governor, that's the bore;" said George, "one cannot get rid of that sort of attraction at a moment's notice."

"Can't one?" said Sir George, raising his eyebrows to a gothic elevation, and taking a huge pinch of snuff. "Oh!"

"I must do something in the way of settlement," said George; "annuity, eh?"

"That will all come as a matter of course," said Sir George, "when you have got it."

"True," said George, "*ex nihilo nihil fit*—that's it."

" If she is a reasonable person she'll wait the event," said George, " if she is not—"

" Ah! " said George; " but she *is*—she *is* reasonable, and what is so remarkably uncomfortable, is exceedingly attached to me."

" Any results, George? " said the baronet.

" Why, governor," said George, " I suppose this is the time to be candid—there is one, a little thing with flaxen hair, which she calls a pledge—a boy."

" Well," said Sir George, " all that must be taken care of—only nothing of the sort can be done, till you have actually the means of doing it."

" No," said George, " but it seems odd—sounds odd even to the girl herself, that I should be indebted to the fortune of my new wife, for the means of settling *her*."

" Those things are as common as daylight," said Sir George. " If there's any doubt upon her mind as to the stability of the means, send her to *me*."

" I'd rather not, governor," said George.

" Well, well, pacify her," said Sir George, " pacify her any how."

" Ah! " replied the son, " that's easy to say, and much easier to say than to do; there never was a sweeter-dispositioned creature in the world when things go well, and she is pleased; but by Jove, governor, when she's up—as they say—it takes more than you think for, to get her down again."

" I have almost always through life," said George, " found women disinterested and considerate. She must be aware—in fact, I presume she is—that some strong measure is absolutely necessary to prop your falling fortunes, and rescue you from more uncomfortable embarrassments. Rely upon it, her care for you will induce her to accede to the change of circumstances. You are not her constant companion *now*—other engagements keep you frequently from her, and if you marry—why—"

" I understand perfectly," interrupted the son and heir " we shall not be *eternally* separated—we *may* chance to see each other occasionally. Upon my word, governor, you were born to be a Mentor to such a Telemachus as I am. There *are* difficulties nevertheless—great difficulties—but they must be overcome. Upon my life it is a horrid bore to have a woman so attached to one as my Calypso is to me."

" Is Frank aware of this connexion of yours? " asked the worthy baronet."

" Why," replied George, " he *is*, and he *is not*—he has, amongst other strange propensities, a fancy for looking at giraffes, and feeding bears in the Zoological Gardens, early in the summer-mornings; and that period of the day suiting me exceedingly well for giving my young woman a trot out, I have more than once met him while occupied in his favourite pursuit. He has

sked me two or three questions, which I have answered so as to avoid a lecture from a junior, and which, considering that junior to be one's own younger brother, is rather more than flesh and blood can stand."

"True," said Sir George, "but now going a little farther into the question of Frank's likings and dislikings; have you any reason to believe or suspect that *he* has formed any attachment—any *liaison*?"

"Unquestionably not," said George; "his friends are saints and sages, and the women he worships are 'valuable remains'—curiosities qualified to take the places of the waxwork in Westminster Abbey, at which I remember screaming myself into a fit in my nurse's arms, when I was a baby."

"He will marry," said Sir George, "and settle, and be respectable, and nothing more; satisfied with a cold mediocrity, he will slumber away his peaceful life, till in a state of almost lethargic inanition, he drops asleep altogether. I never saw a young man so provokingly apathetic in his manner, or so steadily dictatorial in his monitory and even minatory language. And yet his uncle thinks him a wonder."

"And *I* wonder," said George, "what his uncle thinks of *me*?"

"Why that you are a reprobate and a *roué*," said Sir George, "and have not a soul to be saved. However, the *genius* is hereditary—the talent for dulness and gloom descends to Frank from his poor mother, who shared it with her exemplary brother. No matter—it is quite right that tastes should differ, and the benefit is especially great in the case of Frank, who, through that uncle's avowed liberality, will not cramp you in your proceedings hereafter."

How much farther this dialogue might have continued, it is impossible to surmise, had not visitors to Sir George broken it off like

"The story of the bear and fiddle,"

and sent George away to his Calypso's grot, upon one of those "country banks" in the Regent's-park (which never fail), full of anxiety to soothe its fair tenant. Her story was an interesting one—their association extraordinary. It may be hereafter necessary to recur to it more particularly; at present, as it is the duty of a historian to give all the personages involved in his narrative, the benefit of his knowledge of their different characters, suffice it to say, that as George had been the cause of her misfortune—fault must be the word—so was he the sole object of her undivided affection.

CHAPTER V.

THE arrival of Jane Bruff in Harley Street, must be considered by those who take an interest in her fate, an "event" in her life. They who have begun to care for her will not fail to turn over in their minds the combinations of ills, miscalculated by the "elders" as advantages, awaiting her. The full stop of her father's favoured horses at the door brings her to a "period," and the tripled and quintupled knock at the street-door of her paternal home, is in fact the most grievous assault upon her heart and feelings that has ever yet been made upon them; it is the heralding sound of her coming sorrows.

The moment, however, has arrived—the blow has been struck, and our poor dear girl is already in the dingy, dusty atmosphere of a London drawing-room, in which the cased furniture and canvassed lamps proclaimed the dulness of the season, and the unfrequency of those sociable meetings, to which Jane had during her happy association with the hospitable Amershams become habituated.

"Where is papa?" said Jane to the servant who ushered her up stairs.

"The colonel is not come in yet, miss," was the answer.

Jane stayed but a minute in the drawing-room, and then hurried up the precipitous ladder which, in second-rate houses with lofty salons, is dignified with the name of "stairs," to seek refuge in her own accustomed rooms where she remained alone and unattended until the process of unpacking the carriage and getting down Miss Harris,—who almost shrieked at the chance of showing her legs in pirouetting off the step of the rumble; Miss Harris being rather of the heavy-heeled order of Christians; to witness which disembarkation of the baggage, sundry little boys, and one or two "children of a larger growth," in the shape of men and women, drew themselves up, near and round about the door of the colonel's residence. And this circumstance (one of every-day occurrence) certainly does afford matter for speculation. Such things happen nowhere out of England, rarely out of London;—but so it is, that a man cannot call a hackney-coach from a stand and get into it, without attracting an assembly of spectators; a carriage driving up to a house, transfixes to the spot the occupants of the *trottoir*, who remain staring, and wondering, and waiting, to see a dandy lord, or a dowdy dowager, make the brief *trajet* from the steps of the equipage to those of the hall.

They who have suddenly returned to an empty house, from one full of all possible *agrémens*, need not be awakened to a sense of poor Jane's situation. Even the unusual absence of the generally-officious Smylar, added to her dissatisfaction; inasmuch as, besides the amusement which, in spite of her ordinary

Unlike of her, her flippant description of "things in general" afforded her, the circumstance of her non-appearance seemed to a certain extent to justify the apprehensions which she had previously entertained, that she was destined shortly to assume a new character in the establishment. Under these circumstances it is not to be wondered at, that Jane felt a sinking in her heart, and anxiety of mind which only found relief in tears.

While the poor girl remained in this state of agitation, the gallant and disagreeable colonel was in consultation with his intended connexion, Sir George Grindle, who was nearly as nervous as Jane herself, lest by some unforeseen accident or incident, the golden opportunity of repairing his circumstances should be lost, and he therefore resolved scarcely to lose sight of Bruff, during the brief period which was to intervene, as Carey says,

— “between
‘The Saturday and Monday,’ ”

and such was the gracefulness and plausibility of the worthy baronet's conversation and manner, that as the time approached for the introduction of the principal, the distinguished officer became gradually more and more delighted with the projected union between the families; which nevertheless seemed to threaten all parties concerned with more or less misery and distress in their different degrees.

Having completed her descent from the hinder part of the carriage, Miss Harris having moreover ascertained that the parcels, and boxes, and trunks, &c., were safely arrived, that modest, retiring young person, the very model of a lady's maid, waited on Jane to take her orders with regard to dressing, inasmuch as the day was waning, and the colonel was expected home to dinner. Still Mrs. Smylar did not make *her* appearance, and Jane, magnifying all her fears as time wore one, inquired where that usually bustling and officious gentlewoman was.

She was out, but expected home before dinner-time.

Jane felt what vulgar people call "above" asking any more questions on the subject; but there was something in the expected date of Mrs. Smylar's return, too sympathetic with that of the colonel to please her, or even tranquillize her apprehensions; and before she *did* go to dress, she had firmly made up her mind, that she must have been sent for to hear the announcement of her father's marriage, or perhaps to be an early witness of the domestic happiness which its previous celebration had secured to the parties concerned. Nor was it till long after dinner that she became fully aware of the real state of the case, except, indeed, that the absence from table of the dreaded object, satisfied her that the worst she had anticipated had not actually taken place.

Thus encouraged, she inquired after the lady, of her father,

who chuckled and gave one of his significant looks and said, sh
was out upon business, shopping, and doing little odd jobs: an
then the distinguished officer chuckled again.

His reception of Jane was more than usually cordial, and a dinner—a meal to which he devoted all his energies—he talked infinitely more than was his wont. Of course, while the servants remained in waiting, neither she could ask, nor he impart, that which she most longed to hear.

“Hope you didn’t misbehave, Miss Jenny, at the Amershams?” said the colonel.

“I think not,” said Jane; “if I”—

“That’ll do—that’ll do,” interrupted her father. “Give Miss Bruff some champagne—sweet of course, Jane—eh! it will do you good after your drive—eat luncheon—eh?”

“No,” said Jane, “I had no appetite for luncheon; parting with friends like the Amershams, is not likely, to mend my spirits or—”

—“That’ll do,” said Bruff; “bore coming home—eh? Dull work in Harley Street with papa—however, that’s not for long.”

And so by degrees the dialogue assumed a business air; and by the time the dessert was put down, and Bruff and his daughter were left alone, their mutual explanations came in, just in their proper place and season.

“Jenny,” said the colonel, filling Jane’s glass with claret, and his own with port, “your health, Jenny—glad to see you, my girl—health and happiness to you:” saying which, he took her hand and kissed it.

Jane was so overcome by this very unexpected mark of kindness that her eyes filled with tears.

“That’ll do—that’ll do,” said Bruff, “don’t cry, that’s silly—what you have come up about is no crying matter.

“I am only too happy,” said Jane, “to receive any mark of your affection, my dear father, now—”

“That’ll do,” interrupted Bruff as usual; “but tell me—to be sure you are not over-wise—not what I call long-sighted—have you any guess—any suspicion why I sent for you?”

“No,” said Jane; all I thought about it was, that as it was *your* wish that I should come, it was *my* duty to obey.”

“That’ll do, my girl, said the colonel; “stick to that notion and we shall agree capitally—do as I bid you, and I shall never complain of your conduct—rely upon *that*.”

“And I,” said Jane, “have such confidence in your goodness, that I am sure you will never bid me do that which I cannot do agreeably to myself.”

“Ah!” said Bruff, “that, Jenny, is quite another affair, because I might require you to do some things which you might *not* like. However, in the present instance, what I have to ask is no great matter.”

"Well, what is it, papa?" said Jane, rather comforted by the way in which the sacrifice at hand was characterized.

"Why, Jenny," said the colonel, "as I grow older, I feel the want of a head to my establishment."

—“Yes,” said Jane, tremblingly.

"I find that without a lady at the head (or at the side as she best chooses) of my table, things go wrong—and I can't receive lady visitors—and—so—you won't be angry—"

—“No, no,” said Jane.

—“I have sent for you—”

“Yes.”

"I have sent for you to do the honours of a little dinner which I give on Monday."

The relief which this, so different an announcement from that which she had anticipated, afforded to the anxious daughter, is indescribable.

"Oh!" cried she, "I shall be too happy and too delighted."

"That'll do—that'll do," said the colonel; "I relied upon your being here, so I wrote—at least Mrs. Smylar did, in your name—to ask old Lady Gram and Miss Phoezle, and they are coming—and our old friend the doctor. And—then—let me see—oh—Sir George Grindle, and perhaps his son or sons, and I'll see if I can pick up Tom Jaccus, who will sing and play, and make a fool of himself in the evening."

"All this sounds very gay for *you*, my dear father," said Jane, who saw nothing indicative of Mrs. Smylar's promotion; "but who is Sir George Grindle—have I ever seen him here?"

"No," said Bruff, "no—not here—of course you must have met him about, because he is everywhere—he is an exceedingly agreeable man—like myself, a widower—and—a great friend of mine—I want you to like him—very much indeed."

"I am sure," said Jane, "any friend of yours—"

"That'll do—that'll do," said Bruff. "And so you see there is the whole of my plot against *you*."

This Jane, with all her apparent simplicity, and what her unpleasant parent called "know-nothingness," did not exactly believe. In the first place, at that season of the year, Colonel Bruff would not give a dinner without some specific object. In the next place, if that specific object had not been somehow connected with herself, she would not have been sent for; inasmuch as notwithstanding all that Bruff said about female society, he had given half-a-dozen small dinners to men, and never cared for a lady, or ever thought of sending for his daughter; and therefore, however relieved from her worst fears, the young lady felt perfectly assured that something "more was meant than met the ear."

"I am all obedience," said Jane, "and will behave my very best."

"That'll do," said Bruff.

"And then," continued she, "I may write to Emma to say she may expect me back on Tuesday, because their great county-ball will be—"

—"No, no," said Bruff, "that *won't* do—I shall want you much longer than that—I shall have more dinners—and you can always have balls yourself in the season—and—no—no—if the Amershams wish for your society, they must come to *you*—eh?"

"Yes," said Jane, "but this is *not* the season for balls—nor for dinners—and—"

—"That'll do—that'll do," said the colonel; "we'll talk that over to-morrow; but, in the meanwhile, I want you to like the Grindles—excellent people; Sir George quite a trump. However, tell me, who have you had at the Amershams?"

"A very agreeable party," said Jane; and in her mind's eye was conjured up the gay and jovial circle, where care or sorrow never joined in the *mélée*.

"Beaux, I suppose, in plenty," said the colonel, filling his glass. "Lost your heart yet?—eh?—no."

"Indeed—"

—"That'll do—that'll do," said Bruff; "so much the better—I hope you have it now—hope you'll lose it soon."

Then flashed into Jane's mind the dreadful truth—not, however, after all, the most dreadful one; for the Smylear business was *the* point of horror—to become the daughter-in-law of the tawdry, trumpery squeezed-in and poked-out veteran doll, at once the unvirtuous menial and virtual mistress of the house, and (in the authoritative sense of the word—at least) of its master, would have been more than she could endure; but the next degree in the scale of misery, seemed to be indicated by her father's observation as to the disposition of her affections.

Now we have strong evidence—the strongest that the sternest judge can require—the ingenuous declaration of a girl like Jenny Bruff—that Miles Blackmore had never established any serious influence over her, or touched her heart; and, excepting Miles Blackmore, there was no man at the Amershams who, at any period of the visit, ever approached to any thing beyond an ordinary acquaintance with her. As has been before remarked, her sweet, playful, yet ladylike manner, engaged and enchain'd all who knew her; yet, from the unaffected generality of her kindness, none but the errantest coxcomb in the world would have ventured to attribute to himself that which, to the experienced eye and well-regulated mind, was evidently the grace of good-breeding and sweetness of disposition.

"I think," said Bruff, "I think—you will like my friends—my new friends the Grindles—Sir George is of a good family, and an old baronet."

Jane, taking the antiquity of the baronetcy as the standard of Sir George's standing in life, merely nodded her head in acquiescence.

"He is prepared to admire *you*, said Bruff.

The word preparation sounded odd, considering she was not conscious of ever having seen *him*.

"And—even," said Bruff, if he should look in this evening, which is not improbable, you must make yourself amiable. He is a man of the world, and all that sort of thing, so none of your awkward speeches, if you please; and, above all, don't affect to be shocked—"

"Really, my dear father, I—"

"That'll do—that'll do," said Bruff; "I don't know that he will look in; but if he does—eh?—"

"I think it is time for *me* to go," said Jane.

To which her father, who had been counselled by Mrs. Smylar to try the "leading" rather than the "driving" system with Jane upon the present occasion, (Mrs. Smylar having, with her natural sharpness, or tact, or cunning, or whatever it might be called, convinced herself that Jenny, in spite of her quiet, unassuming manner and bearing, was by no means the "silly child" the colonel set her down for), immediately assented, and pulling the bell-rope, ordered lights up stairs, and in a few minutes Jane retired to the small half-dusty, half-dusky back drawing-room, convinced that she was destined to be the future wife of Sir George Grindle, whose chiefest claim to her affection was founded upon the remoteness of his creation.

Harley-street houses, taking the general run of them, are not furnished with what used to be called back-stairs, but which have latterly been called secondary staircases. Now it so happened, that in Bruff's house this almost indispensable feature *did* exist, and scarcely had Jane thrown herself upon the cottoned-up sofa, to think and ruminante upon her present position, before Mrs. Smylar, insinuating herself through the backroom, made her appearance in the dining-parlour.

Bruff was rather startled at her appearance, and not quite pleased; for the gallant and disagreeable officer, however much he was really governed by his housekeeper, was exceedingly desirous that Jane should not be aware of the extent of her influence. Of course it was wholly out of the question that Jane should return to the dining-room; but some servant might come in. Even Sir George Grindle might make his appearance; and, therefore, when she came wagging her little elderly body close up to him, he seemed rather inclined to check the advance.

"Never fear, colonel," said she, seeing by the roll of his eye, and hearing by a sort of a snort, which he gave with his nose, that her presence was not altogether agreeable,—"never fear, I won't stop a minute. I haven't seen our Jane yet, and I'll go to her now. But I haven't left a secret in Miss Harris's whole mind. As I told you, my coffee and curacao have done it. I know every thing. Jane is heart-whole. There was a Mr. Miles Blackmore down at the Amershams,' and Harris says every

body thought he was over head and ears. Don't you see, colonel—”

“That'll do—that'll do,” said the colonel. “Well, and who is Miles Blackmore?”

“A gentleman of good fortune,” said Smylar, “and all that—but Harris knows that Jane cares no more for him than she does for any body also.”

“That'll do said the colonel; “she will never care for any body. Silly girl. However, she seems well inclined at least to listen to my proposal. She knows nothing about it—nothing about the person to be produced. But it will all depend upon *you*. You can work the matter well.”

“Any thing I *can* do,” said Smylar, “I will. The moment you tell me she is aware of the real object, then I will come in as we proposed, with a flourishing description of his fine qualities and personal pretensions.”

“Ah,” said the colonel, “but hadn't you better wait till you have seen him?”

“Not a bit of it,” said Smylar. “I know enough. You have given me the outline, I can finish the sketch, and I think you ought to be rather obliged to me for finding out so soon that we have no predilection to contend with.”

“That'll do—that'll do,” said the colonel.

“One glass of claret—eh, Smylar? Do you good.”

“No, colonel,” said Smylar. “After coffee and *chasse* I don't think it correct; besides, I had better go up stairs and present myself with all due humility to my young mistress.”

“Your mistress!” said the colonel, giving Mrs. Smylar a half-friendly and half-reproachful poke in the side.

“You are a sad creature, colonel,” said Mrs. Smylar, giving him a gentle pat on the side of his head in return. “I *will* take one glass of wine—only do make haste, for I—”

“That'll do—that'll do,” said Bruff. “Here, this is a clean glass. Claret?”

“No,” said Smylar, “sherry, sherry—but I'll take it in a claret glass.”

The colonel filled her a bumper; she raised it to her lips with one hand, the other being engaged by the colonel, who considered it necessary to press it, as a mark of his gratitude for the lady's exertions in the character of spy upon the actions and affections of his charming, amiable daughter.

The glass was deposited upon the table, and Mrs. Smylar was preparing for one or two more observations upon things in general, when the sound of a carriage rapidly driven to the house-door, and suddenly “pulled up,” was followed by a thundering peal upon the knocker, which in the brown-paper-and-paste habitations of that quarter made the edifice shake, and was heard in every part of the building,

" Up stairs, down stairs,
And in my lady's chamber."

Smylar was caught. To fly was useless—the hall as it was called was filled with servants, and the retreat by the back-stairs was entirely cut off. Footsteps were heard close at hand.

" By Jove it's Sir George!" said the colonel; " they'll show him in here."

" Trust to *me*," said Smylar, with a melo-dramatic air; and in one instant she was lost to sight behind one of the dining-room window-curtains. The trick was not, however, executed with as much theatrical skill or success as might have been anticipated; for the servants had left the chair in the recess of the window behind the drapery, which the enterprising Smylar in her energetic activity unfortunately upset, and notwithstanding that her temper was sufficiently elastic to permit her to remain, as Pope says,

" Mistress of herself though china fall,"

she did not quite so philosophically endure the sharp bruise which she received upon one of her spider-like ankles from the more sternly resisting mahogany, and it required the strongest efforts of her philosophy to remain where she was.

As Bruff had foreseen, Sir George Grindle was announced, and with an air and manner much more juvenile than those of his sons, seated himself in the chair opposite to the colonel, which had been so recently vacated by Jane,—much, it must be confessed to the horror of the gallant officer, whose apprehensions of what the worthy baronet might say, while the grand inquisitor was behind the curtain, were of the most serious character; and when Sir George refused his host's invitation to go up stairs and see Jane, on the ground that he had some few things to talk over previously, he became infinitely more fidgetty. He saw with dismay his visitor help himself to a huge glass of sherry, having selected Jane's untouched goblet, apparently determined to have a parley; and when he considered that in addition to the certainty that Smylar must hear all that was said, there was a chance that Sir George might, *en passant*, open the curtain behind which the fair inquisitor was hidden, his "last state was less gracious than the first." In fact, the positive and probable evils of her concealment rendered him almost unconscious of the exordium of Sir George's speech, his faculty of hearing being mainly exerted in ascertaining whether Smylar's breathing could be heard, sharpened by the recollection that she was labouring under a cold, and a consequent apprehension that she might happen to sneeze.

"Now, my dear colonel," said Sir George, coaxing his chair up to the table, "just listen. Here we are—snug—tiled, as we masons say—you are a mason?"

"Yes, yes," said Bruff, exceedingly fidgetty, "—an old mason."

"Well then," said Sir George, "you know what the great secret is—eh?"

"That'll do—that'll do," said the conscious and terrified colonel. "You have named masonry—but—"

"No no," said Sir George, "I don't care about masonry, because you know, my dear friend, in point of fact—"

"Never mind the fact," said the colonel, stopping him; "take some more sherry, and let us go up stairs."

"Wait a moment," answered Sir George; "here we are, *tête-à-tête*, toe to toe; no eye to watch; no ear to listen; and, therefore, as I said when I talked about masonry, and being tiled, I want just to make a confidence with respect to George, which I think due to you under the circumstances."

"My dear friend," said the colonel, "I am so entirely convinced and satisfied with your perfect integrity—ch?—and all that sort of thing—that really at this stage of the business I do not require one word more."

"But," exclaimed the baronet, "this is the particular and precise stage of the business at which the communication ought to be made; and rely upon it, colonel, there is nothing like candour; concealment is always mean, as well as dangerous."

Now in that axiom the gallant and disagreeable officer, no doubt, would at any other period of his life have fully concurred; but at a moment when under peculiar circumstances, the candour of one person and the concealment of another, might in connexion produce some untoward results, he certainly wished to hear as little as possible of Sir George Grindle's otherwise interesting detail.

"That'll do—that'll do" said Bruff; "help yourself to some more sherry, and let us go."

"My dear colonel," said Sir George, "you are positively inhospitable. I dined early and in a hurry, and I want a glass or two of your excellent wine, to brace me up for the first interview with my future daughter-in-law. Don't you find now and then that you want some little stimulus to action? By Jove I do."

"Ha, ha!" said Bruff, pushing away his plate and his glasses, washing out his mouth for the third time, and rubbing and scrubbing himself with his napkins, all these being merely signals for departure repeated. Not a bit of it; Sir George was literally anchored, to the horror of the colonel; and every drop of wine he swallowed seemed to add to his anxiety.

"I say, colonel," said Sir George, "you haven't yet shown our factotum."

"No, no," said Bruff, "it's—that is it's—eh?—that'll do."

"It," said Sir George, "what do you mean by *it*? I mean the lively lady—the—eh, colonel?—the fair housekeeper—what do you call her?—Mrs.—what the deuce is her name?—with the eyes and the curls?"

"The—the," said Bruff, "your housekeeper—ch?"

"No, my dear friend, *your* housekeeper," said Sir George. "Don't deny the fact; and, above all, don't call her '*it*'. I give you my word your account of her—her—her—Oh, Smylar; that ever I should forget her name—and such a name!—I *must* see her to-night, because, nearly as we are about to be connected, I hope I am interested in every thing concerned with your establishment."

"Ha, ha! that'll do," said the colonel.

"Come, come, colonel, she is pretty," said Sir George.

"Why, why," said Bruff, and casting his eyes towards the window-curtain behind which she was eclipsed, he saw it waggle, "I—must say—she is very pretty."

"And a great comfort to you, in her way," said Sir George.

"Yes," said Bruff. "A faithful servant is always a great comfort to any body."

"Ah," said the baronet, "but from what you hinted to me—"

"That'll do—that'll do," said Bruff, "no tales out of school."

"No," replied Sir George, "but we are *in* school now, and that is the reason, as you made no scruple to tell me certain particulars with regard to this spider-brushcr of yours—"

Bruff coughed, and the window-curtain waggled exceedingly.

"I wished to tell *you* of a little affair of George's; of course entirely between ourselves—he has behaved very fairly and honourable about it—but it should be kept a profound secret, *entre nous*."

What to do at this particular moment puzzled Bruff most seriously. To permit Sir George to explain matters "limited to two," within ear-shot of the wily housekeeper, was ruin. To affect sudden illness, which might induce his persevering guest to ring the bell and call for assistance, seemed to be the most likely mode of avoiding the communication which he seemed thoroughly determined to make. Still, however, he delayed the "explosion" to the latest possible moment, in hopes that he might still contrive to get rid of him playfully, and so prevent any unnecessary confusion, which might have the effect of alarming Jane.

"You see, my dear colonel," continued the worthy baronet, "youth is full of indiscretion—naturally so. Old heads upon young shoulders are objects of much greater scarcity than young heads upon old ones—we all know that by experience. Even you yourself, as you were saying the other night—you—"

"That'll do—that'll do," said Bruff; "I remember I told you some particular points of my early life."

"That affair in Canada," said Sir George.

"Yes, yes—about the fox-hunting," said Bruff.

"Not a bit about fox-hunting," exclaimed the baronet, "the history of the ladder, and the waterfall, and the girl turning round and saying, 'Yes, captain, you—'"

—"That'll do—that'll do, Sir George," again interposed the gallant colonel, continuously stimulated in his exertions to stop his friend's tongue, by the wagging of the curtain, which increased proportionably with the disclosures of the colonel's youthful vagaries.

"And the mistake of the room," said Sir George, filling himself another glass of sherry, and cracking a biscuit into halves with the determined air of a man resolved to sit," "and the young lady's dialogue with the looking-glass, and the noise, and the—"

—"There, there," said Bruff, "never mind all that."

"I had no idea, my dear colonel," said Sir George, "that you were sore upon these points—you certainly haven't given up your pranks—eh?—Mrs. Smylar—come, come, no tricks upon travellers—I must have a peep at the housekeeper this very night."

At this juncture, the "housekeeper" herself, poked her head from between the curtains, and motioned with her hand to the colonel to take away his friend.

Bruff saw the indication, and nodded assent—Sir George saw the nod.

"My dear colonel," said the baronet, "what the deuce are you nodding at—eh?"

"Not nodding," said Bruff, "it is a sort of affection of the head to which I am subject, if I remain too long in a dining-room after dinner—the smell of the meat—the wine—"

"Well," said Sir George, "let us go up stairs; but before we go—it won't take five minutes to tell you the secret which you ought to know, and which I repeat, in justice to George, you should understand, it is by his desire I impart. Some two or three years ago—"

"My dear Sir George," said Bruff, resolved, sink or swim, that Mrs. Smylar should not get a hold of him, by being made mistress of this mysterious affair, "I feel very ill—very ill indeed—"

And suiting the word to the action, he threw himself back in his chair and gave a huge grunt, which terrified his guest, who rang the bell violently. In an instant the butler made his appearance, in another minute came the footman.

"Your master is taken suddenly ill," said Sir George; "is he subject to this sort of thing?"

"No, sir," said the butler, "I never saw—ch—dear—"

"Let me throw some water in his face," said Sir George, forthwith flinging over his ample countenance and waistcoat the contents of an overflowing tumbler.

"That'll do—that'll do," said the colonel, shaking his head and ears like an unponded poodle.

"Run for Mr. Phlebot, James," said the butler to the footman, "let him bring his lancelots—and call Mrs. Smylar—and mind Miss isn't frightened—and—"

"That'll do—that'll do," said Bruff, forced to recover; "I am all quite well again—quite well—there, go—go away—get coffee up stairs—tell Miss Bruff we are coming."

"Hadn't he better get the medical man?" asked Sir George.

"No, no," said the colonel, "that'll do—that'll do—there go—go—say we shall be up directly—don't say any thing to Miss Bruff of my illness."

And thus directed the man retired.

"You say," said Sir George, with real solicitude, "you are rather subject to these attacks."

"Not often," said Bruff, "only when the room gets close and the atmosphere heated—"

"By Jove!" exclaimed the active baronet, leaping from his chair, "I'll open the window—the room *is* hot—that's the best thing upon earth—"

"No, no," exclaimed Bruff, "don't let in the London air—oh, no—not that window—up stairs—"

"Well, well," said the baronet, "we'll just undraw the curtains—that will make a vast difference in the climate, without any chance of mischief."

Saying which, the worthy gentleman whisked away the crimson drapery and exhibited to his wondering eyes, the exemplary Mrs. Smylar, seated on the chair before mentioned, with her face buried in her hands, a position which she had chosen upon the ostrich-like principle of security.

"Halloo, colonel!" cried Sir George: "what, have I unearthened your fox? I beg a thousand pardons for poaching, but really—is—is—eh? Ha! ha! ha!"

"Smylar," said the colonel, "beat a retreat—run for your life."

"Mrs. Smylar," said Sir George, "down with those fair hands, and permit me to make myself known to you."

"Sir," said Mrs. Smylar, "you are a gentleman—"

"That'll do—that'll do," said the colonel; "get along with you—accidents will happen in the best-regulated families."

"Coffee is ready up stairs, sir," said the butler, throwing open the door at the same moment, and thus adding a fourth to the somewhat whimsical group.

"That'll do—that'll do," said the colonel.

"This is most painful," said Mrs. Smylar, melting into tears, which might have produced a sympathetic weeping on the part

of the tender-hearted baronet, had not the butler wound up the scene, by saying, in a tone of the greatest satisfaction at having found the housekeeper in due season.

"Mrs. Smylar, if you please, I want the sugarcandy."

This was too much for Sir George, who burst in a loud fit of laughter, under cover of which Mrs. Smylar rushed out of the room, looking pitchforks and marline-spikes at the butler, first, for intruding himself at so critical a moment; and secondly, for bringing the sensibility and sentiment of the other actors in the farce down to the matter-of-fact level of a jar of sugarcandy.

This *dénouement* prevented Sir George from making Miss Bruff's acquaintance that evening. It seemed that having waited much longer than she had expected to wait for her father, and hearing that he had company, she, tired with her journey and the excitement of parting with her favourite friends, had retired to rest. Having discovered this fact, and the colonel's drapery having received considerable damage by the active application of the restorative water, the coffee was ordered down to the dining-room, the atmosphere of which no longer was found oppressive by the gallant host, who finding himself in a scrape, bound the baronet down in a promise to say nothing of what had occurred; and as to the butler, at the period of his arrival, the little woman had so far emerged from her concealment, that but for the laughter of the Marplot, nobody would have thought or suspected that she was doing more than receiving the commands of her master.

While all this performance was going on below stairs, the thoughts and reflections of Jane were, as may easily be conceived, any thing but agreeable or consolatory; nor did the unusual and protracted absence of Mrs. Smylar, whose officious activity near her had always hitherto been unpleasantly remarkable to her, conduce to calm or soothe her apprehension for the future. According to Mrs. Smylar's *programme* she had *fêted* Miss Harris with a regale of coffee and curaçoa; but after that she had disappeared, having, as we know—but as Jane did not—proceeded to communicate to the colonel all the intelligence she had extorted or expressed from his daughter's maid.

Jane could not help fancying that Mrs. Smylar *was* engaged with her father; and not being aware of the cause of her involuntary detention, felt naturally exceedingly annoyed and agitated, still fearing that the event she had so much dreaded had actually taken place, and that Monday was the day intended for the first public avowal of the fact.

When women are distressed or pleased, it is a wonderful relief to them to sit down and write long letters about themselves and their feelings; and although, it being Saturday night, her letter could not be dispatched before the Monday morning, Jane "did herself good," as the children say, by filling four sides of paper with beautiful parallel lines, of about three words each, in which

she expressed to Mrs. Amersham the state of perilous uncertainty in which she was living; promising to let her hear more about her views and prospects when she came to know any thing about them herself. And this pretty transcript of her thoughts, with two lines of postscript to inquire whether Mr. Blackmore had killed the trout, she carefully folded up and placed in her writing-desk—an article of portable furniture which may justly be compared with a powder-magazine, the contents of which a single spark may explode, and a match destroy altogether.'

Sir George, however, carried his point; which it must be confessed he generally was in the habit of doing, and eventually succeeded in giving his friend a brief but effective outline of the history of his son and the youthful mother of his boy. To us it would be useless, and worse than useless; for besides preferring the young lady's version of the story to that of the worthy, yet worldly baronet, his statement, repeated from that of his heir, would anticipate certain points of our narrative, which it is important to all parties concerned, to conceal till a more fitting opportunity arrives for their development.

It was late before these worthies parted; for Sir George, with the grace and softness of the new school, retained some of the grosser and more sensual habits of an older one; and amongst them, a hankering after wine-bibbing, a negative dislike of coffee, and an utter and implacable hatred of tea. To be candid, Bruff's inclinations and propensities were not altogether uncongenial; and, under all the circumstances of Smylar's awkward discovery, had the worthy baronet asked for nectar instead of brandy-and-water, which (hear it with horror ye modern beaux) he did ask for, he would have procured it for him, so that he might conciliate him, and, above all, keep the little *historiette* out of the bay-window at White's, of which semi-circular circle Sir George was one of the brightest ornaments.

It might probably keep the reader up too late if we were even to hint at the probability of any recriminatory dialogue between the colonel and Mrs. Smylar, subsequent to the worthy baronet's departure. But certain it is, that whatever opinions Sir George might have formed from his brief initiation into the secrets of Harley-street, Bruff was perfectly secure—at least for the present—from the shafts of his wit, or the stings of his satire; his immediate object was to "put up" Bruff, and to represent, or to misrepresent him to his friends and acquaintance, as a distinguished soldier and an agreeable companion. In charity, we must imagine that, no opportunity could have occurred for an explanation on the part of the colonel to the housekeeper, after Sir George was gone. No doubt, as early as possible next morning, he made a confidence as to his pretended indisposition, which turned out so ill and so contrary to his expectations. However, she must have been satisfied that the civilian out-generalled the colonel; for he hindered the retreat she was so anxious to make, and actually ~~continued his house~~.

Leave we for the moment the contending, combining, conflicting, and conjoining parties to their sweet repose; Jane to dream of Emma Amersham and the trout-fisher; Colonel Bruff of a title for his daughter; Sir George an extrication from his financial difficulties; and Mrs. Smylar of a bruised ankle, a mahogany chair, and a white jar of sugarcandy.

CHAPTER VI.

IT is universally remarked by foreigners, and as generally admitted by natives, that a Sunday in London is one of the dⁱ imaginable affairs, more especially out of the season, during the sun and dust of Hyde Park, or the flirtations of monkeys the screamings of cockatoos in the Zoological Gardens, a the "world" to either or both of those fashionable loca The Sunday which Jane was destined to pass before the appearance of her expected visitors, was to her the dullest she eve membered.

On her return from church, the gloom of her paternal h and the stillness of the long dull street in which it was loc the closed shutters and newspapered blinds of the opp houses; the silence, broken only by the shrill cry of a milk or the unsrequent rattle of a physician's chariot, attuned mind to melancholy; and the luncheon which her father, who engaged more importantly at Sir George's, had left her to "enj alone, remained untasted.

This was, as premeditated, the period at which Mrs. Smylar to make her approaches, in order to ascertain, as she thoug by her knowledge of life and her theatrical strategy, she shou be perfectly able to do, whether Miss Harris's notice of her young lady's views with regard to Mr. Miles Blackmore, were such as that unsophisticated "young person" apprehended. A platonic affection does not generally enter into the mind or comprehension of a person educated, trained, and practised as Mrs. Smylar, *née* Stote, had been; the thoughts and habits of such people lead them to doubt the possibility of believing the constant association of a lady and gentleman to be the result of a congeniality of pursuits, an accordance of taste, or a mere matter of feeling. Mrs. Smylar, having collected from the less acute, and perhaps more sincere Miss Harris, sufficient materials for an examination of her "young lady," felt apprehensive that, after all, the way in which the *soubrette* put the affair, was merely the consequence of an ignorance of the ways of the world, or, perhaps, the reception literally of what her mistress said;—a course of belief, it must be owned, most dangerous to follow; for ingenuous as girls are naturally, the very spirit and principle of their education, and the formation of their characters induce hypocrisy and insin-

cerity. By nature they are the most candid creatures in the world; but art destroys their minds, as much as the freaks of fashion distort their bodies, until at last their avowed likings and hidden dislikes, their declared joys, and their reserved yeas—all the fruits of a system—render their thoughts and their words so much at variance, that, to use a very old simile, they remind one of the water-nymphs who, when most skilful, looks one way while he pulls the other.

Jane was far from all such trickery; she was as fair in heart as she was in face; as candid in mind as she was in countenance; and although unprepared, of course, for Mrs. Smylar's investigation into the state of her feelings, the very openness of her character and disposition was of itself best calculated to baffle and defeat the vulgar nigglings and nibblings of the wretched, painted, and periwigged demirep.

"I can't think, miss," said Smylar, entering the room with a wild jerk and wriggle of her painfully screwed-in body, "where your dear 'pa is—he promised to be home by two, and here it is half-past—so I thought I would just come and see whether you had your luncheon, or had ordered the carriage, or—"

"No," said Jane; "after their journey yesterday, I should not like to have the horses out without papa's leave."

"Oh, dear," said Smylar, "why not, miss? the colonel would care what you ordered, or what you did. I never saw a fellow so devoted to a child as he is to you. He used sometimes to be cold, I know, and snub, but that is his way. Still I hear—for course I know nothing but what I do hear—that the way he thinks of you now is something quite charming, and his whole briety is to secure your happiness."

"Well," said Jane, smiling, "I feel I justly deserve his love and solicitude; for I cannot, during my whole life, charge myself with having consciously incurred his anger or reproof; but I must confess, however, affectionate and fond of me he may be, and doubtless is in his heart, his manner towards me when we are alone together, has never proved to our friends or visitors the extent of his good feeling."

"Ah," said Smylar, "everybody, Miss Jane, is odd at times; and I am sure I have sometimes cried to hear him say sharp things to *you*, even before *me*. But he is quite an altered man—forgive me, Miss Jane—but I must speak the truth, even though it may make you think me vain—for truth is above all things, and before all things—as I remember repeating when a child; and my dear father—" and here she threw her sparkling dark eyes towards the ceiling, with a sweetness of expression which would have done honour to Dunstable—"used to make us recite,

— 'Truth, though sometimes clad
In painful lustre—yet is always welcome;
Dear as the light that shows the lurking rock,
'Tis the fair star, that ne'er into the main
Descending, leads us safe through stormy life.'

I must so far commit myself to your consideration, as to confess, whenever taking the colonel's orders for any arrangement in the house, I have invariably sought, in my humble way, to induce him to appreciate your character, and to soften that which, however excellent one knows he is, cannot fail to appear to you, and even those who hear it, something like harshness of language and manner."

"I am sure," said Jane, feeling the blood mount to her cheeks, and affecting a smile, "I am exceedingly obliged to you for the mediation—I am only sorry you feel that it was required."

"Don't misunderstand me, Miss," said Smylar; "my present situation does not perhaps justify the expression of ~~feel~~^{regret} as I am imbued with—feelings cannot always suit the ~~us~~^{time} circumstances. I am sure I meant for the best, and ~~of course~~^{proves} was not wrong in my observation, even if I were in my attempts to soften it."

"My father," said Jane, "seems to have profited by your vocation—he was kinder than ever I remember him, yesterday so I suppose I am indebted to you for the agreeable change

"Me!" said Mrs. Smylar, shaking her poodly head; "ob as I have just said, whenever I have an opportunity of rec. you to his mind, and endeavouring to give him a true sen your goodness and kindness, I do it; but then my opportu are few; the colonel, when you are away, lives entirely a different clubs, and we see but little of him here."

"Now," said Jane, "as you have been good enough to do justice with my father, perhaps you will add to the favour telling me why he has sent for me up to town, to do the hon as he says, of a dinner-party which he gives to-morrow?"

"I haven't the slightest idea," said Smylar. "I know t much—he has made an acquaintance with a Sir Geo Grindle—"

"Yes," said Jane, "so he told me yesterday."

"And Sir George dines here to-morrow," said Smylar, Sir George, I hear, is a most agreeable gentleman. I can't say I ever saw him; because, although he has called here once or twice, I have never happened to be in the way."

"My father told me at breakfast," said Jane, "that he was here yesterday evening; and that he could not get rid of him, which accounted for his not coming up stairs to me."

"It is very likely, Miss," said Smylar; "there *was* somebody I know with the colonel, and I dare say it might be Sir George. I know coffee was ordered up stairs, and then when the colonel heard that you were gone to bed, it was countermanded, and the colonel remained with the gentleman, whoever he was, till late."

"And what have I to do with Sir George Grindle?" said Jane. "Why was it necessary to send for me to do the honours of a

man's party? which this would have been, unless two ladies had been specially invited to break the charm."

"Why, that," said Smylar, "Is more than I can tell. The colonel directed me to write two notes in your name, one to Lady Gramm, and the other to Miss Pheezle, and they are coming. I think it possible that the colonel might have heard something from Mrs. Amersham's, which made him hurry you away."

"What could he hear?" said Jane. "Mrs. Amersham has been a mother and a sister to me—nobody can feel a sincerer regard or affection for one who is not actually a relation, than she has for me, and has manifested upon every occasion."

"That's very true, Miss Jane," shaking her curls significantly; "but might not there be somebody there who—I don't mean to say—because I can know nothing but what I hear—" "was somebody there!" said Jane, "what do you mean?" "by somebody," said Smylar, "who might perhaps have shown diffg very particular attention to—"

"I really do not understand what you are talking of," said Geff, getting angry—as well she might.

I mean nothing, Miss Jane," said Smylar; "only the colonel is very particular, and when there is a large party in a country-dance some of the people will talk and make their remarks." "And who," said Jane, reddening like fire, "who has made any remarks about me? and if they have, how did you happen to hear of them?"

"Don't be angry, Miss Jane," said Smylar; "recollect I was not always what I am."

This remark set Jane's innocent thoughts flying about oddly.

"—And I have friends who hear things and see things, and know things; and if I ventured to ask or say any thing, it was all entirely for your good; than which, rely upon it, I have no other object. I did hear—perhaps the colonel may have heard—not that I know that—for how should I?—that there was one person who naturally enough devoted his attentions most particularly to you. Now mind, Miss Jane—do not betray the confidence with which I speak, and pray do not say one syllable of this to the colonel. I know nothing more."

"—But I know much more," said Jane; "that there is not one vestige of truth in any story of the kind—that no one person was more attentive to me there than another—that they are all alike indifferent to me; and that if my father has been led upon any such misrepresentation to drag me from what is more of a home to me than this house, I have been treated most cruelly and unjustly."

Smylar had gained her first point; she had elicited from the lips of the indignant daughter the declaration which she had promised the suspicious father to obtain. The supposings and

imaginings of Miss Harris, under the influence of kind treatment, were to a certain extent satisfactory, but the avowal of Jane herself was conclusive.

"Don't be angry, my dear Miss Jane," again said the artful minx. "I think your ready compliance with the colonel's wish that you should come home was one cause of his good nature last night, and if you can manage indirectly to make him understand—not for the world letting him know that I have said a syllable about the matter—that any notion he may have got hold of, that your affections have been engaged by any body at Mrs. Amersham's is utterly groundless, I think he will be perfectly happy, and your return to your charming friends will no longer be impeded or delayed."

A thundering peal at the house-door, here, as it were, opportunely terminated the dialogue, and Smylar glided through back drawing-room, begging Miss Jane, if it should be colonel, not even to hint that she had spoken a word to him the subject.

Jane, as the door closed upon the departing housekeeper, lost in amazement. What could the hint—the question-report mean? Was Miles Blackmore the man alluded to?—he himself written or spoken on the subject? did he really seriously admire her?—did he fancy his affections returned? But if he did, he would be the last man to allude to his feelings, or what he might have supposed to be hers. Sure Mrs. Amersham could not have so far betrayed her as apprise her father of the particularity of Miles's manner towards her, of which we know she herself was not altogether unconscious? That was impossible. She never would have taken such a step without her knowledge. And now, when she was prepared to believe that her father had been somehow and in some degree apprised of that which in point of fact had never seriously existed, what was she to do if questioned. To denounce Miles Blackmore violently and seriously, was to forfeit his esteem and friendship, which she valued, and lose the charm of his society and conversation, which she appreciated and enjoyed. To admit her real feelings towards him would be to excite, in a mind like that of her father, a conviction of the existence of that which in truth existed not.

Little did poor Jane believe or think that at *that moment* her father had no suspicions, no fears, or the slightest possible knowledge of Mr. Miles Blackmore, except those, which Mrs. Smylar had herself afforded him, and that the scene in which she had just now so well performed was merely got up to satisfy him, as she had promised to do, that there was nothing like a prior attachment in the way of obstacle to the base bargain which he was about to make, and which Mrs. Smylar, for reasons not even yet quite obvious to the reader, was most particularly anxious he should drive to a conclusion.

While this part of the play was acting, it is perhaps right that the reader should be told that another portion of the extraordinary performance was in progress (Sabbath-day as it was), in another part of the metropolis, or rather its suburbs, and which ought here to be mentioned, together with some of the facts that led to it, and the circumstances connected with it.

This was the day on which (conscientiously, as he said) Mr. George Grindle proposed to loosen the ties which had for three years bound him to the young and tender mother of his infant child. It was on this day of sanctity and peace that this accomplished youth, the future husband of Miss Jane Bruff, was to prepare the gentle mind of the lovely Ellen for that separation, which if abruptly proposed, or proposed upon the ground of his marriage with another, would have broken her heart—killed her on the spot. It was on this day that the amiable George Grindle ~~heart~~^{to begin his course of abandoning her}—*to a certain extent*—representing to her the increase of his embarrassments and ~~neither~~^{the} difficulties, and the necessity of making some alteration in the ~~absence~~^{of} what he familiarly called “carrying on.”

“My dear girl, you look as if you had been crying,” said George, as he entered the drawing-room of the villa in which his ~~and~~^{wife} was established, and in which he found her nursing her ~~young~~^{darling} boy, endeavouring to attract his attention to the book which lay upon the table by her side, from which book alone she derived hope and consolation.

“No, not crying, George,” said Ellen, “at least not tears of sorrow; but when I press this darling little fellow to my heart, and read this sacred book of promise, I cannot but feel deeply—”

“You are an uncommon good girl, Nell,” said Mr. George Grindle, “but I don’t like weeping—it’s out of my way—besides, I say never cry till there’s reason for it—perhaps we shall both have to cry in earnest soon.”

“What,” said Ellen, “has anything happened to distress you—to annoy you?—tell me, George. You look flurried—I am sure something has happened.”

“Why,” said George, “ring the bell and send off Tincy, and I’ll tell you what I have to say—it is a bit of a bore—but I suppose it will turn out for the best in the end.”

Poor Ellen, who had become familiarized with the variations of George’s countenance, acted upon as it had been during the last two or three years by fluctuations of luck, as it is called—rather perhaps differences in success—was quite convinced that some misfortune had occurred even more important than those which he was in the habit ordinarily of encountering. She did not trust herself to ring for the child’s maid to take him away, nor did she wish—so closely did she watch and so tenderly attend to every turn of her beloved George’s mind and feelings—to risk any annoyance to him, by the affectionate struggle which would

most probably take place between her and her dear child upon their sudden and abrupt separation.

"I'll take him myself," said Ellen. "Won't you kiss dear papa?" added she, holding her precious burden towards its father. The infant, vexed at being thus carried off, refused his usual endearment, and hid his face in his mother's bosom.

"Naughty child," said Ellen.

"Oh never mind," said George, in a tone of harshness which he had never before adopted: "carry him off—I hate squalling."

Had a skilful artist been in the room to have caught the expression of Ellen's countenance, as she glanced her tearful eye to that of George, he might have traced in its momentary gleam not only the anguish of a wounded mother's sweetest, best of feelings, but the conviction that her first suspicion that something dreadful had happened, was but too just. She hurried away. No cry was heard—the baby wept, but his sobs were stifled by his mother's care—the mother wept, but her tears dropped silently.

To say that George was not affected as well as agitated by task he had undertaken to perform, would be to do him injustice. No heart can be so hard—no mind so depraved—as to sever ties like those by which these two had now for nearly three years been bound, without grief, and pain. The child, which in his gay and playful hours George had ridiculed, when speaking of his father of it, as "*a pledge*," *was* a pledge. He felt the hold and claim it had upon him; and who knows that, when he seemed peevishly to desire its removal from the room, his motive might not have been to put out of sight an object which he could not behold without feeling—if he *had* any feeling—ten thousand additional difficulties in the execution of the design he had projected?

When Ellen left him alone, George threw himself upon a sofa, and gazed round the little drawing-room, the scene of many happy hours, embellished too by the pencil of his young and accomplished victim, and a pang of regret struck through his heart—let us hope, not unmixed with repentance. A thousand thoughts—perhaps too much characterized by selfishness—passed across his imagination, and fickle and flighty as he was, the idea of giving up one whose affection and fidelity he never doubted, and which had never been questioned even by those who, in these days of liberal friendship, might not have abstained from putting them to the test,—agitated and excited him much more than he fancied it would. He knew enough of the character and principles of Ellen, to be sure that when they *did* part—the last of all events she even could dream of—the separation must be final; there could be no qualification, no medium, no sharing of his affection; and this truth he felt so deeply that he was driven to a course of proceeding for which his most admiring friends themselves could scarcely be prepared.

While Ellen was absent (and her absence was protracted in order that she might be enabled to dry the tears which the sharpness of his words and the strange expression of his countenance had caused) her page brought in and placed upon the table, luncheon :—his favourite little *plat* was there; there was the wine he liked, and beside it stood the twin cups, from which ever since they had thus lived and loved, they had drunk and pledged each other. Her little dog came frisking into the room, and barking for joy to see its master, jumped upon his lap, as was its custom. George felt a cold chill come over him as he lifted the affectionate favourite from its wonted rest, and placed it on the carpet, as if dreading even to hear the instinctive and familiar evidence of its recognition.

How strangely are we constituted—how inexplicable the feelings and associations by which we are actuated!—even this heartless man—and *how* heartless nobody at the moment of which we are now treating knew—felt a touch of nature which neither his own exigencies, the dissipations of society, and the absence of any deep soul-fraught sentiment, could check or control. At this moment, Ellen—and oh! do not—do not judge her harshly yet—returned to him; her look was of tender devotion and affectionate sweetness, but dimmed and subdued by the conviction that bad tidings were at hand.

"George, dearest George," said she, seating herself opposite him, "I know something bad has happened. You have been losing again. Why, *why* will you play? you always lose—dearest George, you are careless, thoughtless, every body takes advantage of you."

"No, no," said George, "my dear girl, I am not so soft as that; besides, what advantage can be taken of a man at a game which nothing but dead cheating can make foul? and—"

Here his voice failed him, inasmuch as he knew how soon it would be necessary to undeceive her as to the real cause of his agitation.

"Come, George," said she, drawing her chair to the table; "I told them to get your luncheon to-day in time, because you said you should be here punctually."

"None, Ellen, none," said George; "give me some wine—I'm not peckish in the least, old woman."

These little efforts to maintain the "gay," by little bits of permissible slang, scarcely sufficed to calm Ellen's apprehensions."

"Only think, George," said Ellen, giving him his wine, and sipping hers, "you will hardly believe it—I have taught our dear little Tiney to say, 'Come home soon, papa,'—I have—"

"Poor Tiney," said George, swallowing his drink; "ha! ha!"

"Now, I think," said Ellen, "when I make him say that himself to you, you will perhaps take good advice from so grave a counsellor—moreover he has cut another tooth, and oh! George, every day he gets more like you."

"I hope," said George, "for his own sake, that he will not grow up like me; for Ellen—rely upon it—give me some more wine—rely upon it—I'm not slap up—no—old lady."

She gave him the wine he asked for—she heard his self-depreciation declared in the language he was jocosely accustomed to use; and although she would have been more delighted by finding him express some deeper interest in their boy, she rallied him upon the announcement of his own demerits.

"Let *him* be what you are now," said Ellen, "when time shall have made you what I know you will be hereafter, and I shall be satisfied as to his following in your steps."

"Hereafter!" muttered George, replacing the cup from which he had drunk upon the table; "Ellen that's the word—you have hit it—there is no hereafter for us."

"George, George!" said Ellen solemnly, placing her hand instinctively upon the holy book in which she had been reading when he arrived, and which still lay on the table.

"I don't mean *that*," said George, who began to feel the effects of the wine, of which he had taken, according to the "golden rule" of his peculiar class of dandyism (class B), a very considerable quantity; "I don't mean that, Ellen—only—only—"

"Only what, dearest?" anxiously asked Ellen.

"I'm stumped—done—finished—"

"What do you mean?" said Ellen, who saw, through all this affected off-handishness, something really sufficient to justify her earlier apprehensions. "What *do* you mean!"

"I mean," said he, "I mean—give me—give me some more wine, old woman."

"George," you have had wine enough," said Ellen.

"Old lady, that's not new," said George; "give me some more, that I may tell you all—when I am happy I need no wine, but I can't speak in sober sadness."

"Well," said Ellen; "but tell me," and this she said while helping him reluctantly to another draught, "tell me what is the extent of your loss—what has so completely overcome you—I never saw you so much affected before."

"And seldom will see me so again," muttered the now half-intoxicated man.

"What—how—speak to me, George—you are ill," said Ellen.

"Hush, hush, old lady!" almost stammered the affianced to the yet unseen Miss Jane Bruff; "don't cry—don't cry—I can't stand crying—hear me, my pretty Nelly—I haven't a shilling left upon earth—and out of *this*, as the Irishman says, we must go—eh, Nelly? that's pretty plain."

"It is, George," said she, lifting to heaven a pair of eyes which might have "called an angel down;"—"but—" and she caught his hand in hers, "to me it is nothing—with you and our darling

boy what matters it where we go?—all your difficulties must eventually be overcome, and if they are not, keep your rank and station—be prudent—be entirely what my heart wishes you to be, and hide me in some humbler place than this, to which you will come when the lights of the gay world are out; and there will I work from morning till night to support myself and our child, and even perhaps be useful to *you*."

"Nelly, dearest," said George, "you are a jewel—a regular trump."

"You know," continued she, seeing that his agitation was somewhat abated, "you know I can draw *well* and profitably. It is not as if it were music I was to teach, so that I must, either by going out to give lessons, carry your name professionally, or assume another—I can make whatever talent I have for drawing, available in the humblest drawing; and as for all this sweet pretty place, believe me, dearest George, its chiefest attraction is, that I think you like it."

"In addition to all my other bothers," said George, who, sobered : gain by the earnestness of the sweet girl's devotion, and being more and more convinced than ever, that any proposition tending to a separation would be fatal to her—"in addition to all my other bothers, I begin to think that my father has got scent of our affair—he threw out some hints the day before yesterday, and I know t' governor—you don't—but he is the sort o' chap that never makes allowances—except small ones in the tin line—but none for little extravagances—give me a little more wine, Nelly, and don't cry."

Ellen's eyes were riveted on the face of her beloved—she scarcely heard what he said, but what she *did* hear, she believed:

"Wine, Nelly, wine," again said he.

"Dear George," said Ellen, "why drink in this manner? you never did so before."

"No inatter, old woman," said George; "I'm thirsty, and I like it, by way of a change."

"But tell me, dearest," said Ellen, "what do you propose?—what do you wish me to do?—say, and your word is law."

"Why," replied the amiable young gentleman, "I was thinking that in order to get rid of this peering, prying governor of mine, who, if he once takes a thing into his head, will never rest till he has sifted it to the bottom, if you were to go for six months or so, to your mother at Versailles, till I manage so as to prevent his poking about—for he is just the chap, bad as he is himself, to cut me off with a shilling—inasmuch, Nelly, as our lands are neither broad nor extensive."

"Go!" said Ellen, "tell me where to go—tell me how to act, so that it shall be for your good or advantage, and your wish shall be obeyed. My mother, as you call her, is, as you know, my mother-in-law; and as you therefore know, I am not tied to

her by the affections which bind—ought to bind—and do bind all children, except very bad ones, to their parents; but only show me, my dear George, that it will be for your benefit—that it will either protect you from the anger of your father or improve your finances, that I should go to her for the next half—aye, dearest, the next whole year, tearing and wounding to my heart as it must be—I will go—go all over the world *with* you to secure my own happiness—all over the world *without* you, to ensure yours."

"Why, Nelly," said George, "that is uncommon kind; and I'm sure no fellow living can be more grateful than I am—only you see when things go cross, one ought n't to feel so deeply—and I give you my honour, that all I hope is, if you do what I ask, you won't care so much about me; for upon my life I don't deserve half so much goodness."

"What you may think your deserts are, George," said Ellen, "or what the rest of the world may think, *my* faith in you is as unbounded as my affection. The sacrifices I have made are proofs of that; but try me further, and you will find me ready to afford you more."

"Why," said George—affected, it is true, but with a manner that, to a young and enthusiastic mind like Ellen's was but too visibly disappointing—"as to that, Nelly, what I now suggest is for the good of us all—it would upset all my schemes for our future comfort, and all that kind of thing, if my father was to find out *our* history—the only sacrifice at present, is our short separation and the journey."

"But," said Ellen, "you will go with me, George?—I came with you—and never will the happiness of that journey be forgotten—do not send me back alone to revisit the places rendered dear to me by your society."

"Why," said George, "you see—I think that if I am 'absent without leave,' it may have a queer look—eh? they may talk—some of my friends who are in our secret—there mayn't after all be any necessity for the move—if I can assure myself that we are safe where we are, why then you know, dearest, there will be no occasion to go."

That is to say, as the reader will naturally understand, that if Miss Jane Bruff should "run restive," and not marry according to order, things might continue as usual, until some more favourable result should again render the change inevitable. What would the devoted Ellen have felt, had she been aware of the nature of the contingency?

"Or," continued the exemplary young man, "if the worst comes to the worst, Jack Ashford will be going to Paris in a week or ten days, and will be too happy to escort you and your child and maid; he is one of my oldest friends, and, moreover, *you* know him."

"Yes," said Ellen, "I do—you have brought him here to dine and—"

"Come, come, old lady," said George, "you admire him exceedingly—as indeed everybody who knows him, must—and he admires *you*; he is handsome, rich, and amiable; not over-wise, not likely to illuminate the river Thames with his intellect, but uncommon good-natured."

"I want nobody to admire *me*," said Ellen, "nor can I admit any admiration of *him*; but if for your good the journey is to be undertaken, I would rather trust to the care and protection of strangers, than to a friendly association with Mr. Ashford."

"Well," said George, "you shall have your own way; whatever you like to be done shall be done; and if I can screw out four or five days, I will go with *you*—only don't make up your mind to *that*."

"I will wait patiently your commands," answered Ellen; "I have no wish but to fulfil them—only do not force upon me the society of one whom I know only through *you*—and whom—apart from *you*—I never wish to see again."

"Well, don't be cross, old lady," said George; "as I have said before, I don't know that any of this will come to pass, but I thought it right to give you a little notice. Come, let us look at the garden and the birds, and see if the boy is in a better humour, for I must be off soon."

"Where do you dine to-day, George?—here?" asked Ellen.

"No. To-day," said George, "I dine with the governor."

"And to-morrow?"

"The governor again."

"How exceedingly dutiful you have become," said Ellen.

"I tell you," said the gentleman, "I am obliged to keep close to him, to lull his suspicions—he is uncommon cunning, and it's hard work to keep a secret in a world like this; so come along—let us take our stroll."

Ellen went to fetch her shawl and bonnet; George swallowed another glass, or rather cup of wine; for in the conduct of the heartless business in which he was engaged, his hands were chilled, while his forehead burned, and his tongue clove to his mouth. His devoted Ellen returned, leading her beautiful infant; but he fancied that he again saw a tear standing in her eye, which pained him exceedingly; not perhaps so much because it was an evidence of her love and sorrow for his threatened absence during the two following days, as because he apprehended that she might begin to suspect prematurely his real object and intentions.

The garden scene was but a brief one. George's manner, not improved by what to him was an excess in drinking at that period of the day, rendered his remarks and observations abrupt and wholly of a different character from those to which Ellen had been accustomed. Tiney, whom he had at least affected to love, was snubbed for trying to ask papa questions, and little Fan, the pet spaniel, the twisting and curling of whose ears formed very

important parts of George's amusements while lolling on the sofa after dinner, in the happy days of his real affection for her mistress, received a most uncourteous repulse from the "gallant gay Lothario's" foot, because the pretty little animal could not quite so easily forget its attachments as the beloved of Ellen.

Well, he went; and before stepping into his cab he kissed Ellen on the cheek, and the child on the forehead, and then vaulted as it were into his "watchbox on wheels," and was out of sight in a minute.

Upon a woman situated as Ellen was, the slightest change of manner in the man she loves, acts as powerfully as the least variation of temperature does upon the mercury in the barometer:—if that woman is a mother, how much more sensibly is the alteration felt when it affects her child! Ellen, whose reliance upon George was as yet firm and strong—whose confidence in his honour, truth, and affection was up to this moment unshaken—could not conceal from herself the dread that what he, in order perhaps to calm her fears and soothe her apprehensions, had said of the possibility of his father's discovery of their intimacy, was merely a politic or compassionate preparation for the announcement of the fact. That George could ever voluntarily desert, abandon, or repudiate her, and of himself seek to sever the bonds by which they were united, never entered her head. Still she felt conscious of an alteration—aye, a bitter alteration too—in his conduct; and when she turned from the gate at which she had witnessed his departure, she caught her bright-eyed infant in her arms, and pressing him to her heart, whispered over his white forehead, "Heaven at least will bless *you*, my child."

"Well, governor," said Mr. George Grindle, as he jumped from his cab, and entered his worthy father's library, some fifteen minutes after this separation, "I have broken ground—just made a move—given the young woman a sort of civil notice to quit—nothing harsh or that kind of thing—because it 'an't in my nature—besides you see if we don't nail this Agamemnon filly, it's no good casting Nelly adrift: inasmuch as although we can carry on the war cheaper in France than here, still you know one must havo a sort of retreat, eh, governor? so it's no kind of use whatever to go upon the changing order."

"Prudent fellow!" said Sir George; "sharp, quick, and clear-sighted. By your own account of the affair I think you are rather more entangled than I thought. But, still we must manage all that. The colonel, the bluff Bruff, has been here this morning, talking over matters. He is exceedingly anxious—bites like a pike."

"Why he *does* seem sharp-set," said George. "I thought you told me you were to call there last night."

"So I did," said Sir George.

"See the fair article herself," asked the son.

"No," replied the father, "she was ill—or tired—or would not

I see me, or something of that sort—so we had our coffee, and a little of that, to you, detestable mixture, brandy-and-water, and I came away—lateish."

"Well, but I say, governor," said George, "he seems so hot upon this match, are you quite sure that he has no particular object in starting Miss Jenny—nothing suspicious—no prior attachment, eh?—no delicate mystification?"

"Not a bit of it," said the worthy baronet; "from all I hear she is perfection—"

"—Ah," interrupted George, "as I told you the other day, you have only got her father's character of her. But now—how does the house look? Quiet—what you call—as if every thing was good and regular, and all that sort of thing?"

"Nothing could be in better form," said Sir George; "the colonel evidently likes his grog, and so, George, do I, sometimes. I very distinctly explained to him the history of your affair and connexion with your fair friend; and after all that he had told me of his early vagaries, I could have no scruple in doing so, nor any doubt as to the way he would take the history, or the light in which he would view it."

"You told the history as I gave it *you*?" said the excellent son.

"How the deuce else *should* I tell it?" asked the exemplary parent; "I never heard the particulars except from yourself."

"And every thing looks steady and respectable," said George, who seemed unable to divest himself of the notion that the extreme eagerness of the gallant colonel to conclude the treaty so very speedily must arise from something "more than meets the eye."

"I never saw any thing more quiet, right, and proper, in my life," said the baronet, thinking it absolutely necessary on his part to sink the incident of Mrs. Smylar and the white jar of sugarcandy, as his equally sincere and ingenuous son felt it essential to deceive the confiding Ellen, in whose ejection and repudiation alone the father and the son seemed to agree.

During the protracted morning visit of the gallant and disagreeable colonel to Sir George, which lasted from eleven o'clock (when, as he said, evry body who happened to be in town being in church, they could have it all to themselves) till one, he had completely satisfied the baronet of the *solid* advantages derivable to his son from his marriage with Jane, to which over his glass of what poor good Dr. M'Gopus—whose memory will ever be dear to us—used to call the "mahogany mixture," he had on the preceding evening somewhat loosely though largely referred; and Sir George was just beginning to enter into details connected with the business, when unexpectedly, and certainly most unwished-for, Frank Grindle made his appearance.

The moment he entered the room not only did the conversation cease, but the manner of the two previous occupants sud-

denly changed, and the tone of their voices subsided into what they fancied he would consider a Sunday tone.

"Well, Frank," said Sir George, "where do *you* come from?"

"From a place to which I suppose, my dear father, you don't think one ought to go to—church."

"That's not fair, Frank," said Sir George; "why you should say so, I don't exactly understand—to-day—"

"Oh!" interrupted Frank, "don't suppose I am come here to preach—it is not my vocation. I really came simply to ask what time we are to go to dinner at your new friend's to-morrow,—Colonel what do you call him—Gruff—"

—"Bruff," said the baronet; and then casting a glance at George, which was noticed and answered, "do you really mean to go?"

"I promised you and George to go," said Frank, "and it is an axiom of mine never to break a promise once made, however trifling the obligation, even though it does not involve that, which in this case I should consider a breach of duty."

"As for the duty, my dear Frank," said Sir George, "pray don't let it rest upon that; if you think it a bore, don't go—we can make your excuses."

"I think nothing a bore," said Frank: "I am an exceedingly humble person in the world, and always gratified by any little attention paid me; and certainly not less so, when I feel conscious that it is for the sake of those with whom I am connected—all I asked for, was, because I have engaged myself to see some curious electrical experiments made at four, and wished to know when we were expected."

"Seven, I conclude," said Sir George, "at this time of the year."

"For eight, I presume," said the elder son; "one of the elastic sevens, which one may stretch out, till that great horrid red sun is quite gone out of sight."

"Well," said Frank, "I shall be in waiting here at seven;" and then, perfectly conscious, as he could scarcely ever fail to be, that he was *de trop*, he again retired.

"I wish now," said Sir George, as the door closed, "I wish, George, you had made up your mind to go *with* me, and without him to-morrow, to this place. There's no answering for tastes; and although you carry every thing before you in *the* world, yet *de gustibus non*, and a girl like this Jane Bruff might cotton to a quiet, steady, and what they call an accomplished man, in preference to a fellow like you."

"If she would," said George, "having seen a certain degree of life, and a certain portion of society, she might have him if she liked—because the taste which would be *so* gratified must inevitably be incompatible with mine; and, although of course the 'stumpy' is the thing, one might as well—if possible—be *d'accord* with one's wife. I confess the fellow is good-looking,

And as you say, though he *is* your son, accomplished—but that's nothing—every body is accomplished nowadays, more or less; and as for looks, governor, I'm all for Sheridan's maxim, that the handsome man has only six week's start of the ugly one, and in a three months' race, he'll make it up in the end."

"I quite agree with you there," said Sir George; "but neither do I admit that *you* are in the secondary position in the present instance, nor expect nor fear that three months, or as many weeks, will elapse before the affair under discussion is settled—all I mean to say is, that, as matters have turned out, I wish you had not selected Frank to be of the party."

"Never mind, governor," said George: "if the gallant grenadier will only fork out respectably, and I may say, liberally, and in a masculine manner, you may leave the rest to me. I have never yet seen the female woman, as our friend M'Killumquite says, that I could not conquer. I think Miss Jenny Bruff is not likely to be a splendid exception to my general rule."

And in this sort of dialogue did these exemplary people indulge until they separated, the father to dine in one place, the son in another—thus exemplifying the charming sincerity of the junior to his fond and sorrowing Ellen: the senior having with equal frankness and absence of all reservation, given his description of the state and nature of Colonel Bruff's establishment, which he had practically ascertained the preceding evening. Colonel Bruff himself, on his return from Sir George, with the flourish^g knock at the door which drove Mrs. Smylar from her conference with Jane, excused himself to his daughter for his non-attendance with her in his proper pew at Marylebone church, by explaining that he had gone to hear a popular divine preach a charity sermon at St. George's, Hanover-square.

Speaking of divines, that which Archbishop Tillotson says, may, without profaneness, be quoted as applicable to this crisis of our story:—"Sincerity," says the prelate, "is like travelling on a plain beaten road, which, after all, commonly brings a man sooner to his journey's end than by byways, in which men often lose themselves."

What the reader may think of the various specimens of sincerity which the development of the few family secrets which have already come to light in this narrative, has brought to his notice, we cannot venture to surmise; but lest his patience should be tired, we will give him a short breathing time, until, in the next chapter, he may begin to judge of the results of such amiable and praiseworthy proceedings.

CHAPTER VII.

LITTLE worth recording occurred during the early part of the day

"Big with the fate of Grindle and of Jane;"

nor, as the evening approached, was Jane's serenity so much disturbed as she had anticipated; for her father had purposely abstained from pressing the subject of the dinner and visit of the Grindle family in his brief morning conversation; contenting himself with merely throwing out general axioms and hypothetical observations, touching the advantages derivable to a young woman from making a suitable match at an early period of life, and the virtue of filial obedience when any fair opportunity occurred of attaining so desirable an object.

Time wore on; the dinner-hour arrived, and so did the guests; and, perhaps, as it is the reader's object to ascertain the effect produced by the events of the visitation upon Jane, the best way to attain that end is to let him read the letter which she wrote to her friend Emma on the subject the next morning.

"Harley-street, Tuesday.

"Dearest Emma,

"This packet will surprise, and perhaps alarm you, for although events have occurred since I wrote to you on Saturday to supersede the *interest* of that communication, as it *was* written I enclose it, in order that you may judge of the value of my anticipations and apprehensions.

"The day of introduction is passed—my father had been loud and long in his praises of Sir George Grindle and his family—the baronet and his two sons were presented to me—but so very indistinct has been my father's pronunciation of a preference on his part, that up to this moment I am not at all certain whether he destines me to be the wife of the senior or one of the juniors.

"Sir George is an exceedingly agreeable person—I should say about fifty-three or fifty-four years old. He has seen much of the world, and describes what he has seen with talent and vivacity, and in the art and mystery of *anecdotizing* is equal—I will not say superior—to Mr. Miles Blackmore himself. His manners are particularly pleasing, and his temper appears equally good. He was remarkably kind and civil, and seemed very much interested in every thing I said. He appears particularly fond of music, and is evidently a man of taste and general accomplishment.

"Exactly the reverse of all this, is his elder son; who, with scarcely a single redeeming quality, is one of the most odious

coxcombs I ever met with. Over-dressed, over-ringleted, over-clad, and over-studded, his radiant waistcoat seemed to be the pride of his heart—calculated at once to dazzle and to conquer. His conversation, if his talk can be dignified with the name, is of the most frivolous character; made up of what I presume he thinks fashionable ‘slang’—there is no other word for it—applied in nearly the same terms to every subject started, and every object named; and what struck me as extremely disagreeable, not to say painful, were the familiarity and indifference, amounting almost to insolence and contempt, with which he treated his father, during the whole of the evening—a bad return, in my mind, for the affection which it is evident Sir George entertains for him.

“I think that the effect produced on me by this silly person’s manners was heightened by the contrast they afforded to those which I have been latterly accustomed. Certainly I never saw a young man, by no means ill-looking, so utterly disagreeable *me*.

“His brother, or rather half-brother, is of a totally different class. Exceedingly handsome, with remarkably expressive eyes, and a very intelligent countenance, he appears reserved, without any outward shyness, and seems to be exceedingly well-informed, without a shadow of pedantry. He spoke little, but he spoke well, had would perhaps have said more, had not his father, retaliating as I thought, upon his second son for the offences of the elder one, constantly interrupted him, and, to use Mr. Amersham’s phrase, ‘pooh-poohed him down.’ But although they might, and even did between them, contrive to stop his talking, it was beyond their power ‘to restrain the eloquence of his eyes. I could not help watching his looks when the heir of the house was rallying his father upon his weak points, making him the main object of his amusement. Sir George evidently did not like it, but seemed determined to be pleased, and bore it as philosophically as possible. But Francis (so is the younger one named) evidently felt deeply, and appeared even vexed that I should be placed as I was, with the parent on one side of me, and the hopeful child on the other; and annoyed that I should, so early in our acquaintance, be permitted to see how strangely their family matters were conducted; or, to use one of the young gentleman’s own expressions, ‘how the governor and he carried on the war.’ Whatever his feelings might be, I cannot presume to understand, but it is quite clear that they are ‘a house divided,’ not more in feeling and affection than in character and manner.

“I had but little opportunity of speaking with Mr. Francis; but I cannot help feeling interested about him. He has evidently read much—during the course of the evening his father called him—half playfully I admit—‘a bookworm—and a preacher—a butterfly hunter—and a giraffe-feeder—and a sentimental—*and a misanthrope*’—and several other

things ; and I thought he appealed to me to pity the persecution he was subjected to, while George was trumped forth to the world by his sire as the paragon of perfection.

"The conversation and character of Lady Gramm seemed particularly to attract the elder son ; and, for the purpose, I presume, of what he called ' showing her up,' he devoted himself for nearly half-an-hour, to listening to some of her little anecdotes of herself, set off to the best advantage by the incidental introduction of the names and titles of half the peerage : and it was during this period, in spite of the assiduous efforts of the solicitous Miss Pheezle to secure his attention, that I snatched a little of Mr. Francis Grindle's society. Our *entretien* was but brief, for my father, who was sitting talking on a distant sofa with Sir George evidently about *me*, after we had spoken together some few minutes, came hastily across the room, and desired—or rather ordered me—'to sing something directly,' in a tone, the harshness of which struck me more painfully and forcibly, because, up to that moment, he had treated me with a kindness and consideration wholly unlike any thing I remembered to have seen in him in society, and more especially when any strangers were *here*.

"But now begins my mystery. These people have come and are gone, and I am yet unaware of the particular object of their visit. It is evident that my father means me to marry one of them—it is equally evident that the youngest of the three is not the one. The choice, or rather the fate, then lies between the eldest and the second. If my father—which I pray to heaven he never may—should force me to marry—and that I had the alternative offered me in this very case, I would in an instant decide in favour of Sir George; but perhaps I may yet be spared the misery of forcing my own inclinations, or incurring my father's anger. And such anger, such bitter anger, as it would be!

"A party has been made to Greenwich for to-morrow, than which, as you and I have before agreed, nothing can be more odious; but Lady Gramm is to be *chaperon*, and of course I could not dissent.

"One circumstance seems curious. My usually communicative friend, Mrs. Smylar, has kept more away from me than she generally has hitherto done. Her manner too is different—more restrained. She seems to-day exceedingly thoughtful; all she said to me this morning was to ask me 'how I liked papa's new friends?' And when I answered 'that I liked them very well,' she smiled: but I did not like the expression of her countenance. Nor was it like one of her 'common-place' gleams of *suavity*. It strikes me that something more than ordinary is on her mind—what of course I cannot divine.

"Two of the three new friends have just called—you may guess which were the two. They were not admitted, as I had given an excluding order, for which I have no doubt I shall be duly scolded; but, as I knew that in the ordinary course of

events they would present themselves to-day, I took the precaution to guard myself against invasion, which, as a lone damsel, I thought it right to do.

"Here, for the moment, matters rest; but, my dear Emma, I fear the pause will be but brief. To-day my father dines at home, and alone with me. I anticipate the precise period when the disclosure of his designs concerning me will be made, and accordingly shall live in dread and apprehension till the time arrives. Pray write to me, and soothe me if you can. Tell me all about yourselves, for I love to hear of the comforts and pleasures which I may not enjoy, and remember me to all those whom you think may wish to be remembered.

"Ever yours, dear Emma, affectionately,
"JANE BRUFF."

This was the view taken by the gentle Jane of the occurrences of the preceding evening. The reader must draw his own conclusions. What the impression made upon the visiting trio might have been, it is also essential to know:—with totally different objects, tastes, and principles, they separately and severally thought the gentle Jane perfection.

Mr. George admitted that she was "worth looking after," and that a man might "make it out uncommon comfortable with her, if the stump would suit." Sir George began to think, and that seriously too, that with a mind and qualities like hers, she would be just the person to carry out George's proposition—that the father should marry for the good of the family, without troubling the son with the bore of matrimony. The undisguised pleasure with which she had listened to his agreeable conversation, and the unaffected attention she had paid him, which it was clear to the well-schooled baronet she denied to George, gave this turn to his thoughts; and pretty well sure that, as far as the colonel went, whether Jane attained the rank of a baronet's lady by marrying a baronet or a baronet's heir, he meditated rearguing the case with his son,—convinced that Jane would eventually accept him, and equally sure that while he should be successful in *this* matter, George would be triumphant in any other.

Good natured and ingenuousness of manner in a charming girl, have a surprising effect upon middle-aged gentlemen, who are so universally forgetful of the gradual but certain progress of time, that they fancy themselves loved when they are only liked, and attribute to their fair and youthful companions, (much in accordance with Mrs. Smylar's theory of Platonism), what Moore calls "the sunshine of love;" when, after all, it is merely the "moonlight of friendship:"—to be sure it does, however, at times, beam so brightly, that a man neither vain nor a fool, may without much difficulty be led to mistake the one for the other.

How different, how totally and entirely different from senti-

ments like these were the sentiments of Frank. He had gazed on the sweet child of nature with purity of thought and holiness of feeling. As she has told Emma, he spoke but little; and when he *did* speak it was only to incur some reproof or ridicule from his worldly relations. He knew too well the object of the family visit, and his eyes rested with a look of pity and anxiety upon the intended victim—for such he was convinced, if they carried their point she would be; and amongst his other griefs was one that he had been induced to accompany his father and brother to witness the beginning of a pursuit, the miserable end of which he could not, with *his* principles, fail to anticipate, but to interfere with the success of which, would be to betray and perhaps endanger his nearest relations.

To continue his acquaintance with Jane, Frank was convinced would be to cause his unhappiness; if, as he might hope to do, he should gain her affections, he would distress the other members of his family; if she rejected his addresses after a lengthened association with her had ripened his admiration into love, his own misery was certain. His course was plain—he decided never to repeat *his* visit—never to see Jane Bruff again—or if again, not till she had decided upon what might be called “the main question” as regarded George; for Frank’s imagination, in its wildest flight, had not suggested the possibility of his father’s “being in the field,” as George would have said “sire against son” in such a race.

“Probably no resolution could better have pleased either of the oddly-situated parties than that at which Frank had arrived. One question naturally suggests itself to those who know what the power of sympathy is, and what the qualities of the heart and mind of man are, when under such influence as our sweet Jane had in four short hours obtained over those of Frank. Will he keep it? For an answer to that question the reader must wait a little; recollecting, however, that he has already taken the initiative by not calling in Harley-street, and by having ordered his servant to make preparations for starting for Leamington the next morning.

It should be further noticed, that he absented himself from the family breakfast-table from an unwillingness to hear the remarks which were sure to be made on the events of the preceding evening, or to incur the suspicion of being a spy on the parties concerned, in an affair against which he dared not remonstrate.

“That young woman will come to corn, governor,” said George, “without much shaking of the sieve.”

“I’m not so sure of that,” said the baronet.

“I’ll back the caster in, in two days,” said George.

“She’s a charming creature,” said the baronet, in a tone that startled his son.

"So Master Frank thinks," said George. "He made his play pretty early in the run."

"Frank—psha," said the baronet. "Frank isn't a man to win or, even if he thought of it. No—conversation gay, lively, and sprightly, with a slight dash of satire, and here and there a whisper of scandal, is the sort of thing to hit these gentle, quiet, country-red girls."

"You seemed to be trying it yourself last night, governor," said the exemplary son; "I was obliged now and then just to pull you up a bit."

"No—no," said Sir George, "not the least of *that*—all I mean to say is, that women love by contraries—the gentle, retiring, fair, and timid young creature, is caught by the rattle of a bright genius and a good talker; while the gay, voluble, high-spirited girl rejoices in finding her lover beaten into submission, admiration, and silence."

"I'm no great genius," said George, "but I have eyes in my head; and if that young *creecher's* name isn't Grindle before a month's over my head, mine isn't."

"I wouldn't bet against that," said Sir George; "but I should recommend you to be sharp and active—mind your hits, and don't throw away a chance—for by Jove she is a trump."

"The queen," said George, hearts being the suit; and although diamonds are more in *my* line at present, I can't say that I perceive any reason against honouring her with my attentions. I was wound up to see a sort of half-genteel dowdy—a pill to be taken for a consumptive fortune, which could only be swallowed if well gilt—on the contrary, quite the reverse—she's uncommon nice—just the thing to show the world; and I believe all that she says is right and proper, and shows learning—much of which, you know, I don't profess to understand; her singing, too, is ill in proper form, and her playing and every thing else in the world in a concatenation accordingly—so to-morrow, at Greenwich, I begin the campaign."

"Always considering," said the exemplary parent, "whether you can give her an undivided heart—the affections of such a girl ought not to be trifled with."

If Sir George Grindle had addressed his son and heir in Hebrew or Cingalese, he could not have astonished him more than he did by the utterance of this opinion.

"Why, governor," exclaimed the wondering youth, "turned sentimental all in a minute—four-and-twenty hours ago your tone was much as usual upon such matters; but now we come to the girl's affections, and her qualities, and her—eh? governor—"

"Four-and-twenty hours ago, George," said the baronet, "I had not seen her—I never could have supposed that such a coarse, uncouth father could have such a daughter, especially

knowing as I did, how early in life she lost her mother. One talks on these matters as matters of business as regards fortune, settlements, jointures, and all that, heartlessly enough; but the case is greatly altered when we see in the object of what—as in this case—was at first a mere financial speculation, any thing so perfectly charming as Miss Bruff."

"By Jove," said George, "I felt a little afraid of Frank in the way of rival; but he is nothing in comparison with you. Take her, governor—win her and wear her—the cash will come into the family all the same, and I shall have no trouble one way or the other about it."

"Do not suppose me so foolish as to think of such a thing," said Sir George, "nor fancy that if I know so little of myself as to make such a proposal, she would accept it. All I mean to say is, that Jane Bruff is a prize—a prize which, if won, will secure the happiness of the man who possesses it—and that is all I mean to say."

And so it *was* all he meant to *say*—but thoughts are not to be commanded—fancy is not to be controlled; and during the brief silence which followed the worthy baronet's speech, his thoughts were occupied with the contemplation of the joy and comfort which a marriage with such a charming creature would ensure; while those of George were engrossed with the recollection of the felicity he *had* enjoyed in the society of his devoted Ellen, whose fate, if he married, was irrevocably sealed. Thus the natural feeling of the father's heart was a desire to marry Jane, although he knew he could not win her; while that in the son's, was an anxiety not to marry her, although he was perfectly satisfied in his own mind, that she would sink into his arms on his first declaration.

Poor Jane was wholly unconscious of the effect she had produced upon three persons in one family, although it was most assuredly not the first time she had so unwittingly succeeded. The absence of Frank from breakfast proved exceedingly agreeable to Sir George and his son; but it was scarcely possible for the elder gentleman of the two to secure himself, by all his available arts, from the scrutinizing gaze of the younger one, who, to use an expression of his own, "was up to a thing or two in *that* line."

We know of the visit paid by Sir George and his heir to Harley-street; we know of the determination of Frank to avoid the wretchedness which he foresaw must result to him from the improvement of his acquaintance with Jane; but as yet we do not know how or in what manner that determination was treated.

In Regent-street there is a vast establishment, known at least by name, to half the husbands and fathers at the West-end of the town, where every necessary of life, from a ring, a bracelet, or a necklace, down to a cottage-bonnet, or a *jupe-bouffante*, may

be purchased on the most reasonable terms—if not of price, at least of time for payment. To this emporium Miss Brus' directed her course, drawn thither in the ancient carriage of her sire, by "Sugar and Salt," driven by a gloveless coachman with plush shorts and white cotton-stockings; the footman behind being to match. Just as this exceedingly-imperfect equipage drew gently up to the door of Messrs. Howell and James, "Sugar and Salt," having in their composition none of that spirit of tearaway prancing which frightens the humbler pedestrians on the *trottoir*, and occasionally covers them with certain portions of the Macadam black-pudding which in wet weather is so easily made and so universally taken in the great thoroughfares of the metropolis, Mr. Frank Grindle happened to be passing down the street. A graceful bow and a gentle smile from dear Jane, naturally and inevitably checked his progress towards the University Club, whither he was proceeding, and planted him at the coach-door.

"I hope," said Jane, after the usual salutations peculiar to English society, "I hope we shall see you to-morrow at our white-bait party."

"Why," said Frank, who felt himself committing the unheard-of crime of blushing, "I—think I must go to Leamington in the morning—I am exceeding sorry—but—"

"I see how it is," said Jane, "you don't like us; but I assure you when you know more of my dear father, and get used to his manner, which I am aware is to strangers *brusque* and odd, you'll think better of us. Try us once more—I conclude that Sir George and your brother mean to keep *their* promise."

"Oh," said Frank, "you may rely upon *them*; but—I have a duty to perform; a sick friend writes to entreat me to go to him, and—"

"That alters the case," said Jane; "but now really is he so very ill that one day's delay is important?—if not, do come with us. I assure you, my amiable friend, Miss Pheezele will break her sensitive heart if you are not of the party."

"Dear lady," said Frank, "her heart must be exceedingly tender and susceptible if it breaks on my account after one meeting with her. I—"

"Well," said Jane, "I would advise you not to be cruel. Besides, papa I know will be vexed, and I shall be seriously angry. Not that, if Miss Pheezele's charms fail of attracting you, it is likely the fear of *my* anger should compel your presence—so, you must do what I believe all men are determined to do—just as you please."

The dialogue here ended, and Frank handed the fair Jane from the carriage to the door of the emporium, and proceeded on his track. Jane looked sweetly—she spoke kindly—he had certainly promised to be of the party—but then he had made up his mind to break off at once an acquaintance, of the perils of which to

his peace of mind he was even more satisfied now than he had been the night before—he had ordered his horses—to be sure they could be countermanded—perhaps Colonel Bruff might be offended if he stayed away, and break off with the whole family; besides it would be entertaining to see Miss Pheezle's airs and graces, and hear Lady Gramm's histories of the peerage, which she had at her fingers' ends, with all the little scandals therewith connected.

Besides, perhaps his father might attribute his absence to sulkiness or disinclination to join the circle in which he was destined to hold a secondary place; and so he doubted, and weighed, and calculated, till the recollection of Jane's last smile flashed across his mind, and involuntarily stamping on the pavement, he exclaimed—not mentally but audibly—I *will* go with them."

"Do, Frank," said a voice close to his shoulder, as he was pushing open the door of his miniature club-house. Startled by the sound, he saw at his elbow one of his friends, who had overheard the determination; "but you needn't tell the whole town your intention."

Frank felt perfectly satisfied that in the excitement of the moment, he had "named no name," and that his friend, who was a bit of a wag, had not accidentally gained possession of what, short as had been his acquaintance with the young lady, he already began to consider a secret.

Frank's sentiments towards women were certainly the reverse of those entertained by his half-brother George. He felt the unaffected kindness of Miss Bruff as she intended he should feel it. He admired her beauty—he reverenced her mind and manner, and was charmed with her accomplishments. From a sense of honour and duty to his brother and father he had resolved to shun her society, lest in time he might fall a victim to the qualities which he so highly esteemed; but the earnestness of her invitation to the next day's party had an effect upon him entirely different from that which it would have produced upon George. George would have set her down as an easy victim to his wonderful powers of fascination; nay, the chances are that she would, before the day was over, have filled the principal character in one of the little "Memoirs of his own Times," which he was in the habit of delivering, *vir à voce*, to his friends at Crocky's. Frank was exceedingly gratified by her good-nature, and as we, as well as his friend in the street, know the result of his deliberations upon the subject, it may be fairly surmised that her friendly manner charmed him out of his projected journey; but as to the notion that such a being as Jane Bruff could do what is called "falling in love at first sight," it never entered his head.

Jane returned home after her drive, and dressed for dinner, having inquired of her maid if she had heard Mrs. Smylar say whether any body dined with her father. To her grief and dismay she found it was as she had anticipated, to be a *tête-à-tête*.

She knew that it was wholly out of the question that the evening could pass over without the colonel touching upon the subject nearest his heart, and as that subject was unquestionably the last which she desired to discuss, she began to regret that she had not engaged Miss Pheezele to come and destroy the purely domestic character of the evening. It was, however, now too late; her father had actually arrived at home, and dinner would be ready in less than half-an-hour.

One little thing may strike the reader as curious in this little history—we mean the peaceful neutrality of Smylar. After all her promises to the colonel to urge upon Jane the merits, personal and mental, of Mr. George Grindle—whatever representations she might have periodically made to the colonel as to what she was doing in that behalf—it is certain that she never opened her lips to Jane upon the subject. Never, indeed, in any of the very brief conversations which she had with her, had she even hinted at the particular object of the colonel's solicitude, nor permitted herself to seem to know that a matrimonial alliance for her young lady, with any member of the Grindle family, was even contemplated.

It may be confidently relied upon, that a lady like Mrs. Smylar never "runs cunning" without some exceedingly good—or, as the moralist would say—bad reason for what she does. She had promised her patron to adopt a particular line of conduct, tending to what they agreed was an important and desirable result. She had not fulfilled that promise. In turning all the family affairs over in her mind she thought she had ascertained a shorter and surer road to the goal of her ambition, and therefore considered it quite justifiable, to deceive the father, in order, if possible, eventually to destroy the daughter. Mrs. Smylar was, in truth, a "nice woman," as the reader probably already anticipates. Still, not only her conduct, but her motives, must for the present remain concealed.

The reader already knows so much of the designs of the FATHERS implicated in this history, and of the feelings of the SONS, that it would probably tire him to go through the dialogue which passed between Jane and the colonel after their exceedingly dull dinner. The great point gained by her by the candid development of papa, was the ascertaining that George—to her the odious George—was the *aspirant*—backed, favoured, and urged upon her by authority.

"He's a fine young man," said the colonel.

"Very *fine* indeed," said Jane.

"Handsome?" said the colonel.

"He thinks so," said Miss Bruff. "But surely, my dear papa, no countenance can be handsome without something like intellectual intelligence?"

"That'll do," said Bruff, "you want to run him down—you don't like him—eh?"

"Why really," said Jane, "considering that I never saw him till yesterday, my likings or dislikings cannot be supposed to be very strong. I think Sir George a remarkably agreeable person."

"Oh! Sir George!" said the colonel. "Well—so he is—remarkably agreeable: but—not quite so suitable an age for you."

"I am not so sure of *that*," said Jane, wishing if possible, to render less serious the appeal which the paternity was making, "he is an accomplished gentleman—full of anecdote—gay—lively, and even loveable."

"That'll do," said Bruff. "If you have that sort of feeling towards *him*, it is all one to *me*—so as I see you settled and titled. I like a title—it would sound well—and I should feel myself relieved of a heavy responsibility."

"But," said Jane, "assure yourself that, as far as I am concerned, your responsibility is exceedingly small. I am perfectly happy as I am. I have friends who love me, and who respect and esteem *you*. And as for my ever listening to the addresses or proposals of a human being, without your previous sanction and knowledge, I would die first."

"Ah! that's all very well," said the colonel: "but I don't know—girls are girls—and there are crowds and flocks of fellows at the Amershams'; some without sixpence in their pockets, and some with a great many thousand pounds out of their pockets, all hovering and gallivanting."

"Father," said Jane, the tears mounting to her beaming eyes, "have you no faith in your child? have you no confidence in her? Do you think me so base—so lost to every sense of shame, so dead to every tie of duty, as to permit the slightest approach to what you apprehend, without instantly acquainting you with the circumstance? No, father—no—nothing of the nature which you seem unjustly to suspect me of, exists. I have no predilection—I have no attachment—no preference, except in the ordinary course of society; in which, most certainly, one very much prefers some persons to others with whom we are associated."

"That'll do," said Bruff. "I don't want to make you cry—only—it does seem exceedingly strange to *me*, who have known the world for a long time, and have been more than forty years in the army, that a girl should speak contemptuously of such a capital fellow as George Grindle, who dined with us yesterday."

"I do not speak contemptuously of him," said Jane, "nor should I have spoken at all of him if you had not urged the subject upon me. He is the acquaintance of a day. I have no reason to dislike him more than I dislike any other visitor at your house whom I don't particularly know. I certainly prefer the manner and conversation of his father, and certainly

I think the second son, Mr. Francis Grindle, infinitely more agreeable than his elder brother. I met him at the door of Howell's and James's to-day, when I was going to buy a few little things I wanted."

"Did you speak to him?" said Bruff.

"Why, I couldn't well avoid that," said Jane, "for when the carriage stopped, and I bowed to him, he spoke to *me*."

"That'll do—that'll do," said Bruff. "So you prefer *him* to his elder brother?"

"Yes," said Jane, "I do. I think him more intellectual—more clever—more sensible."

"Ah," said Bruff, sipping his wine, "and what did you say to him?"

"I said to him," said Jane, "that I hoped he would not forget his engagement at Greenwich to-morrow, and told him I should be exceedingly angry if he didn't come to amuse Miss Pheezle."

"Oh!" said Bruff, "to amuse Miss Pheezle—that was it?"

"Yes, papa," said Jane, "that *was* it; but I neither intended to conceal from *him* when I said so, nor from *you*, when I tell you the history, that I meant him to understand that I should be very glad if he joined our party, for I think him exceedingly agreeable, and a great acquisition in an excursion, the intrinsic *agrément*s of which I confess myself entirely incapable of appreciating."

"That'll do, Jenny," said Bruff; "you have fallen in love with the wrong man, that's all."

"Love!" said Jane, "why should I love any of them, in a day's—not a day's—but a few hours' acquaintance? Really, my dear father, you do not justly appreciate the character and feelings of young women. I can easily imagine Mr. George Grindle has established in his mind a theory and principle upon the subject of 'lady-killing,' which he exhibits in his looks, and wishes to illustrate by his manner. But, however captivating he may fancy himself, or *you* may consider him to be, I really think it requires a little longer time than one short evening to win a heart, however charming the gentleman, and however susceptible the lady."

"I am not talking of *him*," said Bruff, somewhat angrily; "I am talking of the other—Mr. Frank."

"As I have already said, he is a more *likeable* person," replied Jane; "only don't accuse me, my dear papa, of having fallen in love with *him*, because I urged his going with us to a fish dinner at Greenwich. Recollect you did the same thing yourself with respect to Lady Gramin and Miss Pheezle."

"Psha!" said Bruff, "I asked them merely as a matter of course to come and play propriety—*chaperon* and companion, just to make it easy and comfortable for you, and all that."

"With *you*, father," said Jane, "I needed no *chaperon*—no companion; but I confess I am glad they are going, for they

must—especially the dowager—engross a certain degree of the attention and conversation, and that will give *me* a better opportunity of considering the qualities and qualifications of your new friends."

That there is consciousness about guilt, in however so great or small degree it exists, which incapacitates the culprit from the full exercise of his powers, mental or corporeal, there can be no question. Just at this period of their dialogue, the gallant and exceedingly disagreeable Colonel Bruff would have given the world to inquire of his daughter whether Mrs. Smylar had spoken to her on the subject of Mr. George Grindle, as she had promised to do, before *the* new thought had entered her head, to which we have already made some allusion: but as brave as he was in the field—boring as he was in society—callous as he was to reproof, insensible as he was to ridicule which was so frequently heaped upon him, he had not sufficient courage even to force the name of his influential housekeeper from between his lips in a *tête-à-tête* with his own child.

After the positive agreement between him and Smylar, that she should zealously advocate the cause of George, it struck the colonel as remarkably strange that his daughter should be at all at a loss to know which of the party was destined to be her husband; and he began, for the first time in his life, to suspect that Smylar had, somehow or from some reason, deceived him. He hemmed, and ha'd, and endeavoured to pluck up a spirit to inquire of Jane whether she *had* spoken to her on the subject; but a mingled feeling of respect for his child—(the smallest portion of the admixture), a dread of conveying a stronger idea to her mind of the housekeeper's influence than yet existed in it, and a conviction that if the said housekeeper *had* deceived him, he dared not exhibit his anger at her defection to any great extent, kept him quiet; save and except that he indulged in a sort of muttering, muttering noise in the way of soliloquy, which at last increased to sounds so audible, that Jane begged him to ring the bell for lights upstairs, lest she should overhear that, with which she was quite sure he never could mean to trust her.

Jane, when she reached the drawing-room, threw herself upon the sofa in a state of great uneasiness. On a less well-regulated mind, the prospect before her would have had unquestionably a more violent effect. She had told her father that her heart was disengaged, and that she had no predilection, and had formed no attachment. That this was true, nobody who knew Jane Bruff, and knew that she had said so, could doubt. But, as she has already said in these pages, it is a dreadful alternative when a girl is denied the power of remaining unmarried, and drawn into the positive misery of marrying somebody she neither does, nor—as she feels—ever can love.

There is no doubt but that constant association, juxtaposition,

and a periodical participation in the same pursuits and amusements, tend so wonderfully to soften asperities, overcome prejudices, and excite sympathies, that a man so odious to a young lady as to be admitted by her to the honour of an introduction merely that she may have the satisfaction of cutting him the next day, may in the course of time melt the hard heart of the scornful fair, and convert her smile of contempt into a tear of affection; but Jane felt that in Mr. George Grindle there was nothing redeeming—no talent to justify his vanity—no genius to qualify his absurdity; and she satisfied herself that “neither time nor trouble” could render him endurable;—and yet—so it is—he was the idol of poor Ellen.

But stay one moment—when Ellen first knew George, and George first knew Ellen, he was altogether a different person from what he was at the period of which we are now writing. He was travelling abroad when he met her; he was then young, handsome, gay, and ingenuous; he saw the innocent creature living happily in the bosom of her family—he admired—loved her—she reciprocated his affection—he loved *her then*, as fondly and tenderly as *she still loved him*. But when he returned to England, he was swept into the vortex of that society which, *blazé* and wearied of the common routine of amusements and pleasures, and charmed only by a ceaseless change of pursuits, treat with contempt and scorn the very notion of sentiment or feeling; and which, upon admitting—he it remembered into its second class—Mr. George Grindle, exhibited its solicitude for his worldly welfare by ridiculing his expressions of regard and affection for his once-beloved Ellen, and manifested its excessive friendship by volunteering in more than one or two instances the task of consoling the “*Didone Abbandonata*,” at whom and whose despondency on account of George’s absence, the enlightened community was pleased in George’s presence to laugh and be merry.

Ellen, poor Ellen, saw this progressive, and rapidly-progressing alteration in his manner towards her. The interview, meant at one time by him to be the last—which has already been noticed, too deeply stamped upon her mind, the sad, the killing truth. Not for one moment during the night of that day did she close her eyes; her infant slept with her, and she clasped it in her arms as the only link that bound her George to *her*; and when, as the morning dawned, the baby lisped its father’s name, which she had anxiously taught it to repeat, a flood of tears relieved her almost breaking heart. This, be it recollectcd, was the morning of the day on which George first saw, first knew Miss Bruff, and first entered her father’s house.

It must be evident to the reader that the “case,” as the phrase goes, of George and Ellen was not a common one. Neither her conduct nor conversation indicated levity of manner, or laxity of principle; in the cultivation of the talents she possessed, and in

the exercise of the accomplishments she had acquired, all the time she could spare from the instruction or amusement of her boy was occupied, save when the object of her first and only love was with her; during which hours, to *her* of happiness, the influence she hoped, and till very lately believed, she had over him, was exerted in all gentleness and sweetness to win him from the ways which she, secluded as she was, felt fully aware, led to destruction. For some time he never failed to communicate to her his losses at play. Then it was she urged him to desist—nay, to the very last, as we have already seen, she did not relax in her advice and entreaties on that point, little imagining how the being by whom all her anxiety was caused, intended to rescue himself from the dangers and relieve himself from the difficulties with which he found himself so seriously threatened.

In this position of affairs we will leave the various personages of our history for the present. Much may turn on the events of the morrow. A fish-dinner at Greenwich has, before now, tended considerably to accelerate the proceedings of a love affair, and Colonel Bruff's party may conduce to the forwarding the business of matrimony in which he and his friend are so busily engaged. In what direction the impetus may be given, the reader is for the present left to conjecture.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE reader probably imagines from the manner in which the last chapter concludes, that he is to be forthwith, and immediately transported to the Ship, or the Crown and Sceptre, or some other such popular hostelry at Greenwich. But no—different is to be his fate, and somewhat deferred the *fête* of others; for as it seems, it will be necessary, before we lodge our party in one of the strong-smelling, bright-shining greenhouses—conservatories nobody could call them—which overhang the mud of those regions, to say a word or two of our friends the Amershams, and perhaps of other persons connected with our history.

One of the peculiarities of woman appears to be a passion for match-making. Wholly disinterested as women almost universally are, touching worldly matters, one never sees a woman wholly uninterested in a flirtation, or what may be more properly called, a *tendre*, which happens to be—or that she thinks is—in progress under her own roof. Mrs. Amersham, who was full of all the best feelings of human nature, and really attached to Jane, could not endure the occurrence of anything which might or could interfere with what she had resolved in her own mind was an existing mutual affection between her and Miles Black-

more. No—she had determined that Miles Blackmore was desperately in love with Jane Bruff, and that Jane Bruff perfectly and entirely reciprocated his tender feelings.

It should first be understood—as it most probably is—that an affection for one, or even two members of the family, does not necessarily imply a general liking of all the others. Mrs. Amersham was, as we know, the devoted friend of Jane; but Mrs. Amersham's sentiments as regarded the gallant and disagreeable colonel, were of a character so diametrically opposite to those which she entertained towards his daughter, that she felt it right, not only because she thought she was acting in conformity with Jane's own views and wishes, but because, prejudiced as she was against Bruff, she was sure that no man of this selection, could possibly be a suitable match for his charming daughter—to do all she could to cherish and improve, and warm into active life, the affection which she was resolved to believe, and perhaps did believe, existed between her two friends.

It has frequently been remarked, that the surest way of bringing about an attachment of this sort, is the constantly talking of it; not upon the black-pudding principle of the Reverend Sterne, but because the constant association of two names leads on the part of their owners to an association of ideas, whence eventually arise feelings, and a question of either or both of the parties, as to why it should not be so, or why it should; which latter, as tending rather to increase the difficulty, seems better calculated to amplify the anxiety and encourage the disquisition.

We know—at least we think we know—that Jane Bruff is *not* in love with Miles Blackmore; indeed she has said as much. But then there *are* people in the world who are sufficiently base and low-minded to give *that* as a strong and cogent reason for believing that she is. They, be they whom they may, know nothing of Jane. Duplicity and deception are strangers to her heart. When her father first touched upon the point, he might have been assured of a plain, candid answer, without invoking the aid of Mrs. Smylar or her *curaoa*.

That being ascertained, the next question to be asked is, what was the state of Mr. Blackmore's feelings towards Jane?

We have seen clearly enough that he was much and deeply interested in all she said and did—that he followed her at the Amershams' like her shadow—that while *she* listened with pleasure to his agreeable conversation, he devoted himself to *her*; and although there seemed no earthly reason why, if he felt the preference which that devotion indicated, he should not own it, still something appeared constantly hanging over him—to damp his ardour—to check his enthusiasm; and the fine bright sunny hours which he occasionally enjoyed in her society, were uniformly chilled and clouded at some period of the day or evening; he then became *distract*, and seemed to fly from the happy-

ness he had been courting, and became absorbed in thought, and even in grief.

These were signs and symptoms exceedingly well calculated to illustrate Mrs. Amersham's theory, but which still were quite inexplicable; because she felt assured that if he had done that which she was in daily expectation of his doing,—propose to Jane,—he would be accepted by *her*, and not, as she thought (looking worldlily at the affair), be refused by the colonel. What could he expect for his daughter more than a gentleman of good fortune, good character, and of quite as good a family as her own? Dear Emma was almost angry to find these two negatives holding off from the one affirmative. She thought it would be such a nice match (for she was not either foppish or fantastical enough to call it a *bon parti*), and they were such a charming couple—and so on—as women will talk who believe, and very properly, that ladies and gentlemen are only sent into the world to “come together.”

Another great point made by Mrs. Amersham was, the wretched dulness of poor Miles Blackmore after Jane's departure. He spoke seldom—absented himself much—pursued his fishing with unremitting ardour, taking no one with him—leaving the drawing-room early for bed—smiling rarely, and singing not at all. Of all these symptoms, so quickly exhibited after Jane's departure, Emma made a *catalogue raisonné*, with which she intended to produce an effect upon her young and affectionate friend's heart; but the movements of the gallant and disagreeable colonel were so prompt and rapid, that the details of the change which had taken place during the last eight-and-forty hours, could not reach the fair object of her anxiety before the expedition to Greenwich, which was so wonderfully to accelerate the progress of the Grindle affair.

It was in vain that Mrs. Amersham endeavoured to beguile Miles Blackmore into a dialogue touching the merits, and beauties, and virtues of Jane Bruff. She was full of the subject, and knew quite enough of human nature to know that however shy the true lover may be of mentioning the name of his beloved, nothing charms, entertains, or enchantas him half so much as hearing her talked of, or talking of her himself if any body else begins the subject. Not so Miles Blackmore—the moment she was spoken of, it seemed as if some discordant chord had been stricken, and he either varied the topic on the instant, or quitted the room, or changed his companion, “as the case might be.”

That there are secrets in all families, nobody can doubt; and Mrs. Amersham began to think that there must be some secret reason for the extraordinary conduct of the gallant, gay Miles Blackmore towards her fair friend, inasmuch as it was impossible for the most casual and superficial observer not to perceive that he *was* deeply interested in her fate, and perfectly conscious of her merits, her virtues, and her beauty; and yet how was she to

account for his disinclination to rescue her from a fate which she dreaded, by making a proposal which he must be certain would not be refused by either the young lady or her father.

In vain did the anxious Emma puzzle herself to imagine where lay the hindrance:—as for touching on the point again, or indeed in time to rescue Jane from the impending infliction of a husband whom she could not love, she gave up all hope. Indeed, upon the last occasion of her artfully bringing her conversation with Miles Blackmore, in the most artless manner, to bear upon the qualities of the absent fair one, the abruptness with which he broke off the dialogue amounted—so unlike his usual manner—almost to rudeness.

This settled the matter, and when she next wrote to Jane, she did not mention Blackmore; quite sure that Jane, knowing not only her wishes, but up to that period her belief of the existence of a mutual affection between them, would perfectly understand and appreciate the sudden disappearance of *the name* from her friend's letter.

Wrong indeed were Mrs. Amersham's speculations as regarded the conduct of Miles Blackmore—conduct which she attributed either to coldness of feeling, or wanton trifling, or to a self-love, perhaps still more base than those, but which had its origin in thoughts, in doubts and fears of which no man living, save himself, could even have dreamed the existence.

For the present, then, it seems we must leave this divided pair to their destinies, and Mrs. Amersham to her disappointment, which as we already know was great, and return from the sylvan shades of the Amershams' villa, to the empty, dusty, dry, and dreary London, in order that we may accompany unseen, the *gay* party to Greenwich; upon the results of which, as the "heads" thought, so much would depend.

Jane had, as we know, expressed a strong dislike to this sort of expedition, and with a full recollection of the striking attributes of mud, and sunshine, and savoury smells which are the most unsavoury in the world, anticipated neither pleasure, nor even amusement, from the excursion.

What are called the middling classes, enjoy a day to Greenwich in full perfection. They go early—they visit the hospital—they range the park—they flirt and they laugh, and are happy, and generally conclude the sports of the trip, by rolling down the hill immediately in front of the observatory—they dine at an hour when their appetites are ready for their dinners—they select the particular day when the tide of our majestic river serves to bear upwards on its bosom the noble craft with which it is covered—and they conclude their festivities with a decent tea, and a little something afterwards, which carries them well into the dusk, and so home, all snug, sociable, loving, and comfortable.

In this way the memory of the days of the first Edward is well

celebrated ; and although the domain did pass into the hands of the uncle of Henry VI., the visitors do not reproach themselves with having dined with Duke Humphrey, but rejoice in the evening over a slight cold collation in London, in memory of the pleasant hours they have passed.

And it is a noble sight to see nearly three thousand veterans, who in the days of England's triumphs, and when she had a navy that swept the seas, risked their lives and lost their limbs in maintaining the then untarnished honour of her flag. There they are, enjoying peace and plenty, comfortably housed, admirably fed, well and characteristically clothed ;—taste their food, visit their berths, and judge for yourself. This gratifies the true-hearted Englishman in a visit to Greenwich; and this, so closely connected as it cannot fail to be with the prosperity of our mercantile navy, doubly gladdens the heart when, as we have just said, the up-tide bears upon its silver-surface the untold millions of wealth which are to maintain our superiority over all the nations of the earth—small though we be. It is this, and things like this, that give an interest to Greenwich, where one sees the veteran sailors, green in old age, planted like venerable willows—weeping ones—drawing their nourishment from the banks of that element which in earlier days had been the field of their glory:

Jane, who had as it may be called scientifically, or perhaps it should be said historically, visited this interesting place, felt all due regard for its claims upon the antiquarian and the philanthropist, but beyond *that* her taste certainly did not run in the line of glaring suns and shadeless windows, the strong odour of fish-frying, nor the sports of mud-scrambles, in which certain lively creatures in a large party had once endeavoured to interest her. Upon the present occasion, however, she was doomed to a totally different kind of perversion of taste, and one for which she was, with all her earlier predilections, not entirely prepared.

The Greenwich affair was completely under the nominal control of papa ; but then papa who was not in the slightest degree *au fait*, took advice as to his proceedings from Sir George Grindle, who in *his* turn took advice from his all-accomplished son and heir ; so that in the end Bruff, full of liberality as to “founding the feast,” came at last to supplicate his intended son-in-law to raise upon that valuable foundation the feast itself, which, upon the express understanding of entire irresponsibility, George undertook to do ; and accordingly sent off a tiger with a note to the landlord of the—I forgot which of the taverns—the recollection might seem invidious to the master of the house, and exceedingly disagreeable to some of the visitors—to order “a dinner,” for which the colonel was exceedingly indebted to Mr. Grindle, as he afterwards was to the tavern-keeper.

The carriages were ordered at seven. Jane thought to herself that it sounded late as the starting-time for a *locale* whence

the view among other things is considered attractive. However, to *her* all things were equally agreeable under existing circumstances; and therefore, when she found herself, her father, Lady Gramm, and Miss Pheezle seated in the family-coach in the dusk of the evening, at twenty minutes after seven, commencing a journey to Greenwich, she contented herself with wondering why, if the play in which she was to take so prominent a part, *was* to be acted, it was necessary to carry the performers out in the dusk of the evening to a distance from London, for the representation at what might be considered almost a provincial theatre.

Sir George, and, to his no small mortification, his *two* sons, proceeded direct in his carriage to the place of rendezvous, starting rather later than the colonel and his party, because George could not contrive to get home from his morning pursuits until seven.

The *trajet* to Greenwich is, to be sure, anything but picturesque or inviting. Long rows of shabby houses edging a dusty road are diversified only by taps and turnpikes, or an exciting bridge over one railroad, affording the gratifying view of another; so that the *vera* and the dinner, and the re-union, form, in fact, the sugar after the physic. To be sure, on the present occasion, the dusky shades of evening had begun to throw into indistinctness the surrounding objects, and when the parties met in the dinner room (which, in order to render the fashionable absurdity of late hours in such a locality more palpably obvious, contained one huge window balconied for the sake of the view), it had reached such a point of obscurity that the only object discernible upon the black mass of water before the house, was the light in the bow of a steam-boat, which, in its undulations on the top of the tide, looked much like the lantern of one of the drunken watchmen of the olden time, when reeling along the streets to his box.

The colonel was chilly—Lady Gramm felt sick at the smell of the river—the candles, which were now lighted, would not bear the roughness of the breeze. The windows were accordingly closed, and in order to exhibit, to the tavernkeeper's great delight and satisfaction, a tawdry piece of crimson stuff, trimmed with broad yellow worsted, the curtains were drawn, and dinner ordered forthwith. So much, as far as it yet had gone, for the Greenwich excursion, with which, as it seemed to Jane, who disliked even the true genuine sun-shining, mud-breathing affair, as done in other days, Greenwich had nothing on earth or water to do: and that if it had not been for the name of the thing, they might with equal reason have assembled at Ellis's hotel, the London tavern, or, if "on rurality bent," at that new object of attraction and fashionable patronage, the grand caravansary at the Euston-square station of the Birmingham railroad, where the *gourmand* and the *gourmet* may be satisfied to their heart's content.

The dinner made its appearance. To George the construction of the banquet appeared a matter of great interest, since its arrangement had been left to his taste and judgment. To Colonel Bruff it afforded matter for surprise—to the ladies, except Lady Gramm—who had amongst her friends assiduously earned the *sobriquet* of Lady Cram it afforded no particular satisfaction. Turtle began it—green fat, embodying a very disagreeable recollection of a cold in one's head, in a separate dish—then came the train of blue-coated, white-waistcoated, black-shorted worthies, with a string of dishes, whose covers, as has elsewhere been remarked, glittered like so many cuirasses on a field of battle. Turbot and salmon leading—which had no business to be there—and then water-soutchy of perch (all wrong *there*)—salmon (still worse)—flounders and soles. Eels, ruled by the Lord Mayor not to be fish—fried, stewed, boiled, spitchcocked; and then whitebait, the very last of the season, and then six *entrees*. The eternal boiled fowls and the tongue in the middle, like *Macheath* between *Polly* and *Lucy*; and then a haunch of venison, which you might “nose i' the lobby,” after which, ducklings at one end, quails at the other, with a small dish of ortolans done just one turn too much, as George Grindle oracularly pronounced; and then a profusion of secondary *pâtisserie*, followed by a dessert of choice fruit, evidently from Gravesend or its vicinity. Wines of various sorts enlivened the conversation, which was but of one sort; for, during the lengthened exhibition of this equivocal luxury, nothing was talked of, nothing discussed, but the relative merits, or, as George insisted upon it, demerits of the different dishes; the utter failure of one attempt, and the commendable comparative respectability to a certain degree in another.

One only thing happened during the repast, calculated to make any body smile, when Sir George, while discussing the universally-discussed Greenwich question, as to the real nature and character of whitebait, and arguing as to their not being the young fry of shad, or any other fish, but a distinct class of themselves, upon the ground that they had been frequently found with roes in them, said to the colonel, who didn't much care what they were, so as they suffered themselves to be bathed in lemon-juice, and popped by half-dozens at a time into his capacious mouth, “It is said they are migratory.

“No such thing—no such thing, said the colonel, “they are sprats!”

George Grindle opened his eyes very wide at this *dictum*. Francis looked towards Jane, who did not laugh, and Sir George looked towards Lady Gramm and Miss Pheezle, who did.

It is the commonest possible remark, that when a party is made for the purpose, *express*, of being agreeable, it invariably turns out the dullest imaginable. At the period of the afternoon to which we now refer, the colonel, who knew that he should

pay for the feast, and had therefore resolved to have at very least the lion's share of it, had eaten himself into a state of stupidity. Before him, and in *that* state (because the excess of eating had been, as he considered judiciously and constitutionally qualified by a proportionate modicum of champagne, &c.), Jane did not dare to venture a remark for fear of being snubbed; and Sir George, who was unquestionably the most agreeable personage present, felt that any little observation of his would subject him to a "show up" from George, who had been specially appointed by the colonel, Jonkauoo for the evening, whose conversational powers and fascinating qualities he was most anxious should be displayed and developed to their best possible advantage.

That the presence of Francis acted as a wet blanket upon his father and brother, nobody who knew the family could doubt, nor was it at all an agreeable feature of the evening, that the said Francis was Jane's right-hand neighbour at dinner, as George was her left hand one. It is true he spoke little, but his good sense induced him gently to check and endeavour to turn the current of conversation, when it seemed to him running rather faster or more roughly than seemed quite meet, and more especially to moderate the tone of irony and ridicule which his brother's language invariably assumed while sparring as it were with his new old friends, Lady Gramm and Miss Pheezle.

Lady Gramm's great quality was a perfect and unquestionable knowledge of every body existing—of the "nobodies," she knew nothing. But of every body who was, as she considered, any body, every particular, historical, biographical, and anecdotal, were at her command; observing, however, by the way, that she never, by any chance, was correct in any of her details.

Miss Pheezle was a lady still young in her own conceit, who, some thirty years ago—when every fool did not write a book—had perpetrated a romance called "The Knight of the Green Cross," with poetry interspersed, whence upon all occasions she quoted with a parental fondness, which for a spinster, never likely to be unspinstered, afforded the most gratifying evidence of maternal affection for her literary offspring.

Out of these materials George and his father could have made much, in the way of amusement, and George had done his best with my lady in Harley-street the first and last time he met her; but Francis marred the sport. Lady Gramm did not object to a little—not a very little champagne—and then she became agreeable, in the way of being laughed at. Miss Pheezle, who affected great abstinence because her doctor had warned her of the consequences of indulgence, kept her constant companion in check, so that it was absolutely necessary where they were well known and thoroughly appreciated, to draw off Miss Pheezle to a distant sofa, and induce her in all sobriety to quote her own "Knight of the Green Cross," before it was possible to get the dear roundabout Lady Gramm to make herself perfectly absurd at the other end of the room.

Upon the occasion of the Greenwich affair, after the *gourmands* had stupefied themselves with the quantities of things they had eaten, the affair became exceedingly dull—the distant shouts of drunken revelry in some other parts of the house—the ringing of bells—the clattering of dirty plates outside the door, added to the smell of tobacco in all its various grades and qualities—the candles burning into the sockets with finger-long wicks—Sir George sitting with his fishy-looking eyes fixed on Jane's fair face—the colonel with his chin on his chest, nobbing and dobbing his great empty head downwards—Lady Gramm exchanging looks with her toady Pheezle—George greatly bored, and Francis still more annoyed at the sufferings which the “forbidden” fair one was enduring, rendered the whole concern a dead failure, or as the phrase goes, “a flat shine.”

At last Miss Pheezle, who fancied herself fifteen at fifty-six, put on one of her best Gorgon grins, and darting a killing look at George, said,

“ You have travelled a good deal, Mr. Grindle ? ”

“ An uncommon sight, ma'am,” said George; “ I have been going over the ground for more than three years.”

“ Have you been in Greece?—that classic land,” said Miss Pheezle.

“ I flatter myself I have,” replied the travelled beau.

“ You have seen Athens then? ”

“ Oh yes,” said George.

“ What delightful recollections it must have awakened in your mind! ”

“ Not exactly recollections,” answered George—“ pass the wine, governor—because I never was there before. I recollect the road uncommon well, and as for Athens, I delight in it; there's a fellow out there, can do a cutlet as well as Ude himself, and as for a rump-steak—for any body who eats them—he'd beat the best cockney out-and-out. Over at Thebes we had a *table d'hôte* of four-and-twenty—all English but three—every thing our own way.”

“ But I was speaking of the antiquities—the associations—the—”

“ Oh ! ” said George, “ ah—about the antiquities I don't know much—of course, the pyramids in Egypt and all those sort of things are uncommon droll to look at; but the associations—I say—I told my friend Charley Rollicker, as capital a fellow ever handled ribbons, that if he would start a good team of eⁿ on across the isthmus from Cairo to Suez, he'd beat any association going.”

“ Is that Charles Rollicker any relation to the Muntingtons? ”

aid the important Lady Gramm.

“ I don't know any thing of his birth, parentage, or education, but he is a remarkable nice fellow,” said George.

“ That's he,” said Lady Gramm; “ his mother was a first

cousin of Lady Mackdoddles, who married a Colonel Stobbs, and he died, and then she married again, a second cousin of my father-in-law's great-uncle; it is the same—a dark, short, thick-set man."

"On the contrary," said George; "tall, fair, and handsome."

"Ah! never mind," said Lady Gramm; "it is the one I mean—it must be—there is no other."

"Yes," said Miss Pheezle, "those mistakes in complexion will happen—as I say in my 'Knight of the Green Cross.'

"The night was dark, no moon was there,
Whether her knight was dark or fair,
How could Eugenia know?—"

"That'll do—that'll do," said the colonel awakening in a slight degree from his slumber; "I have heard that before."

"I am too much flattered," said Miss Pheezle, who thought every body had read her "Knight of the Green Cross."

"We had some uncommon good fun," said George, "at Florence, or somewhere—it was Florence, I think, because I recollect we had an uncommon good soup—we went to vespers before dinner, or as it was there voted supper, and filled the *bénitier* half full of ink—an old trick, I admit—so that the devout disciples having bobbed their curtesies, and done all they thought decent, went to prayers with their faces as black as that of the man in the play who smothers his wife."

"Have you published your travels, Mr. Grindle?" said Miss Pheezle.

"No," said George; "but I am in treaty just now with one of the best of the printing people. It's a bore not to have published something—every body publishes now—and I have a young friend who sketches uncommon—or rather finishes up my views—I just give a sort of outline of the thing, city, or village, or temple, or whatever it is, and then in the foreground, if it is land, he puts in a lot of cows and horses, or camels and dromedaries, or ploughs, and people, and things in fancy dresses; and if it is to be water, he makes a lot of waves, and has in a great boat—uncommon picturesque—with a bit of wreck swimming, and a few wild ducks flying about, and that sort of thing, which sets it off; and if he likes a mountain or two in the background, for what he calls 'effect,' why, however flat the country is, of course I let him poke them in, for these painters will have their way."

"Pray, Mr. Grindle," said Lady Gramm, "when you were at Florence, did you meet a relation of mine, Lord Slimbury?—his mother's first cousin married my sister's father-in-law—he was born in the year 1785, and had three children; the second was drowned at Geneva, and the eldest was killed by a fall from his horse afterwards—a very fine young man; the third—"

"*I know him,*" said Sir George, rallying from a slumber, which naturally enough seemed to oppress the whole party, "and a denced good-fellow he is."

"I really don't know any thing about him," said Lady Gramm; "he has disobliged his family by a very improvident marriage, and, what is called colloquially, gone to the dogs."

"Dogs," said Miss Pheezle; "do you recollect, Lady Gramm dear, what I say,—

‘Where is the knight—o'er moors and bogs,
He hunts to-day—look to his dogs.’”

"*I am serious,*" said Lady Gramm; "he has behaved exceedingly ill."

"Oh!" said Sir George, who felt that he had struck a discordant chord—and then came a pause.

And what had been going on as regarded the two silent ones of this party?—Francis, who at dinner sat next Jane, had, in the course of some new arrangement when the dessert was put down, moved so far round from her as to be, in point of fact, nearly opposite to her. For Francis to have spoken to Jane, would have been a crime in the eyes of the high contracting powers. Even to have joined in the conversation, and to have expressed his opinion of the nature and character of George's narratives, if, as it inevitably would have done, it opposed them, would have been not only high treason as related to his father and brother, but wholly contrary to the rule of conduct which he had laid down for himself when he joined the party. But eyes—what say they?—could Francis prevent his eyes glancing—ay—more than glancing—resting upon the sweet placid countenance of the gentle Jane, while George was going on with hundreds of absurdities, platitudes, and ignorances, of which we have only quoted one or two? Could Jane, who saw precisely how Francis was affected by the flippant absurdities of his brother—the completely-spoiled child of the secondary circle in which he moved—feel unconscious of the interest which the quiet but intellectual young man took in her fate? It must be owned that the elders had put themselves *hors de combat*, and that the gallantry of the baronet had for once given way to gastronomy; so that in the end, as any body who knows the world would have guessed, the party had much better have stayed at home, and our friend Colonel Bruff kept his seventeen pounds nine shillings and elevenpence waiters not included, in his pocket.

But worse came of it than this. Coffee at length was ordered in another room, to which the gentle Jane and her friends retired. Here the night having closed in, but the moon having risen and the wind having fallen, the windows were, by Jane's desire, opened, and the transition from a climate redolent of an eaten dinner, constituted as theirs had been, to the fresh air blowing

from the river, tempted the heroine of the day into the balcony
Lady Gramm declined, and Miss Pheezle quoted from herself,

“Close up the shutters, lie down in your nest,
For keen blows the night-wind on Adela’s breast.”

Jane, however, did not heed this warning,—she leaned over the railing of the balcony and gazed on the moon—on which those whom she loved afar off might be gazing too. The sound of the voices of those leaving perhaps for ever their native home, was borne on the breeze—the distant tinkling of the ships’ bells striking the hour—fast fleeting, for those on the eve of their departure—the hoarse cry of the sailor conning his ship—the dash of the water under her bows—the thousand effects so different from those produced upon her mind in the hot closed room in which she had been for two or three hours pent, and the one crowning feeling of disinclination, not to say disgust, towards the man whom she now was convinced was destined to be her husband, all came full upon her mind—her bosom heaved and her breath faltered—tears came to her relief—she hid her face, chilled as it was by the night air, in her hand—nor did she awake from the painful, yet almost pleasurable painful reverie, until warned of the imprudence of exposing herself to the night air, by Mr. Francis Grindle, who had first left the dinner-room, and, why he scarcely knew, had proceeded to the balcony where Jane happened to be.

How strong the resolution of man, where woman is concerned, may be—what the firmness of his resolves, or what the extent of his philosophy, it is useless here to question or discuss. Certain it is that Miss Jane Bruff was infinitely more pleased by the gentle, dissident, yet earnest solicitude of Mr. Francis Grindle for her health, than she had been with any part of his brother’s display during dinner; for although George was resolved to marry her, the unsentimentality of his character, and his utter disbelief in the best qualities of women, led him to imagine that Jane would—as she might indeed have done—look upon any serious attack upon her heart as an unnatural absurdity after so short an acquaintance; and therefore he determined to captivate her by what he considered a flourish of his own, and an attempt to “show up” the other two ladies.

The attempt certainly was a failure. Jane saw no wit in his conversation; nor did she, although perfectly awake to the foibles of Lady Gramm and Miss Preezle, consider his manner to them, who were *her* friends, at all complimentary to herself. In short, she had made up her mind.

Five minutes at the most—no, not more than four—passed in the balcony before the return of Jane and Francis into the room—the other men were still absent. What *he* said to her, or *she* to him, of course nobody can tell; but we know quite enough of

her to know that nothing could have passed between them but the ordinary exchange of commonplace observations. What then? the simplest remark—a mere question—a plain answer—ten words about nothing, may, under circumstances like those in which Jane was placed, do more than all the studied eloquence of years. There is a sympathy—a something indescribable and inexplicable—which outstrips the test of time. No matter—whatever *did* pass in those few minutes settled a very important question in our history.

Let it not be imagined that this infers a love at (nearly) first sight feeling in Jane, in favour of Frank—not a bit of it—all the effect produced by whatever happened, was to settle the question of love at first sight for his half-brother; and yet in all that passed not one word did Francis speak to the disparagement of George—nor did he even mention his name. That Jane had been uncomfortable—unhappy during dinner, Francis had seen; Jane had seen that he saw she was so—that was all—his coming into the balcony then was enough, without saying a word about it. Practical attentions, respectfully offered, beat all the wordy eloquence in the world—especially if the young lady is melancholy, and the moon happens to shine *a little*.

In spite of George's dandyism, and his consequent abhorrent abstemiousness from wine, upon the present occasion, partly with the design of swelling old Bruff's bill, and perhaps from recollections of former orgies, which were succeeded by sundry destructive proceedings on the return to London, the pink of perfection far outdid his usual outdoings, and became, to use a colloquial expression, uncommonly bosky; an odd proceeding for a young gentlemen on his promotion; but for which, besides the motives just ascribed to him, a cause might be found in the thoughts and recollections, which could not fail to haunt his mind, of home—"the home, sweet home," of other days. It was evident that he cared no more for Jane than he did for Lady Gramm or Miss Pheezle; he knew nothing of her character or disposition; and although he had naturally enough praised her the day before, and joined, or rather rivalled his father in eulogiums upon her, he thought it wise to endeavour to astonish "her weak mind" by displaying the weakness of his own. This was a dead failure, and when he came somewhat seriously into the drawing-room—or literally the withdrawing-room—looking palish, and smelling most awfully of the cigars which he, together with his respectable parent and the gallant and disagreeable colonel, had thought proper to smoke, much to the damage of the colonel's propriety, Jane could scarcely muster up a smile of ordinary civility, to greet him, or affect a frown of playful reproachfulness for his not making his appearance earlier.

After the arrival of the beaux, old and young, sundry waiters made their appearance, bearing salvers, whereon were placed cups containing a bitter infusion of soot and water, imbibed by a large

proportion of the British population as coffee softened in its flavour by another admixture of chalk and water, administered as cream. To this succeeded a hot decoction of birch-twigs and sloe-leaves, dignified with the name of tea; all of which were eventually qualified—or, as the colonel called it, “settled”—by some exceedingly bad noyeau mixed with gin, cased in basket armour, and called maraschino.

By this time it was half-past ten o'clock, and in spite of the strained efforts of every one of the party to make matters lively, the unanimous feeling which existed—but which no one ventured to express—was a desire to get away and get home. Sir George in vain endeavoured to keep up the ball, and even proceeded to the dangerous expedient of rallying Frank on his dullness. The reply was merely the expression of an unconsciousness of any particular “stupidity” on the occasion, and George’s observation upon the parental snub went only to impress upon the mind of Jane that the company then and there assembled were not considered by his “learned brother” sufficiently “blue” or “deep red” (and he sported *that* joke as a new one of his own) to excite any interest in his mind, or induce him to favour them with any of his observations.

To Jane it appeared, as indeed was the fact, that with the exception of herself and Frank, the ladies and gentlemen of the *coterie* had miscalculated the strength of the champagne, of the “cup,” and of the various other liquids which they had swallowed. Lady Gramm had fallen into a doze, and Miss Phcezle had walked out into the balcony to look at the moon. Nobody walked out after *her*, and she remained in meditation for some time. When she returned to her friends, she seemed as if the fresh air had been exceedingly serviceable to her.

At length came the departure. Then there was an attempt at a new arrangement of the passengers. The colonel and Sir George, whose candour as to the object of the party increased as the “hot and rebellious liquors” which they had swallowed, progressively took effect, insisted upon George’s going in the colonel’s carriage with Jane and her father, while Lady Gramm, the *chaperon*, and Miss Phcezle, were to be buttoned up with Sir George and Frank; and so, in the end, it was settled; but with a sort of boisterousness and fuss which attracted the attention of, and provided amusement for, a group of well-dressed jokers who were lounging round the door of the tavern. To Jane the change was odious; but she knew quite enough of her *her*, especially as he *then* was, to offer the slightest objection to it; although certainly nothing could well be more painful than an association with the man whom she now too plainly discovered was intended to be her husband, and the parent who was resolved that he should be so; never forgetting the exceeding coarseness of the colonel’s language when he chose to be playful, and the violence of his temper when he thought fit to be

angry, and the fact that both the said lover and the aforesaid parent were scarcely conscious of what they were saying, or perhaps doing.

Then, think of the effort which Jane felt she had to make in keeping up a conversation calculated to ward off any allusion to the matter nearest her father's heart. She affected good spirits, and as they passed the walls of the noble establishment which dignifies the surrounding dirt, she launched out into a high eulogium upon the "*pietas augusta*" of Queen Mary, and continued uninterruptedly to descant upon her virtues and charity till a peculiar noise to which, "in the afternoon," she was not altogether unaccustomed, announced to her that her respectable and gallant sire was—to use a strong expression—fast asleep.

To wake him would be to rouse the lion, or rather to disturb the bear; yet she felt by no means pleased at being thus entirely left to the mercy of the protestations and declarations of George Grindle, by the soft, or rather noisy, slumbers of the gallant officer. The word love from his lips would be death to her, even though she was conscious that she was doomed, sooner or later, to hear it. She had seen in his manner, and discovered by his conversation during the day, that her companion held himself invincible in the art and mystery of lady-killing—nay, that he felt satisfied that she herself had already fallen a victim to his fascinations she had reason to believe. She could not be blind—or, even if blind, deaf—to the reasons why he had been transported from *his* father's carriage to *her*'s; it was evidently to afford him an opportunity of what the saints call "improving the occasion," or as *he* would himself have said, "making his play."

Having therefore exhausted the hospital, Jane, who could not avoid remarking the fixed look of devotion of her opposite neighbour, began upon the universal topic of railroads—their speed—their danger—their advantages—the change they would work in society;—to all of which George seemed to listen with the deepest attention, without even venturing a reply. Jane felt reassured; two miles had now been travelled, and the advances which she had dreaded had not been made—the infant passion had not been even whispered—her ear was still unprofaned—her hand was yet unpressed.

What strange creatures women are—the best, the wisest! Nobody but a woman perhaps will believe, that with all his dread of the sieve—with all her disinclination to the parley, and, with her firm determination as to the surrender, this fair and gentle "soldier's daughter" was rather disappointed—disappointed in the female sense of the word—at the perfect quietude of the dragon with whom she had been packed up. Such implicit deference to all she said—such a total absence of all remark—piqued her into the belief that the dandy who pretended to her love, did not consider her worthy of his notice. After another

observation upon trains, and trams, and trucks, &c., she looked at him for a dissenting or assenting observation, when she found, certainly to her surprise, that the ever-graceful George, the admired of all beholders, was, like her excellent parent at her side, in a state of blessed somnolency.

Then it was, that Jane first seriously instituted in her mind a comparison between her opposite companion and his absent half-brother. True it was that Frank had found very few opportunities during the day of enjoying any thing like conversation with Jane; nor, knowing his views and resolutions touching her, and her position in his family, would he have availed himself of any opportunities which might have presented themselves: and true it is that the course Jane would have preferred to pursue, would have been to think nothing about either of them. But when the contrast was actually forced upon her—when she recollect ed the intellectual qualities of Frank—his gentle and submissive approach to the balcony—the assiduous, yet, on his part, natural and unaffected solicitude which he expressed touching the effect of the night air on her thinly-clad frame—the genuine anxiety to fetch her shawl, which implied as she thought an equal anxiety to prolong her stay where she was—the few observations which he made—his evident dislike to his brother's treatment of the “other two ladies;” in fact, his wholly unconscious development of the respect and admiration which he felt for Miss Jane Bruff (made too in spite of himself), *had*—yes, *had* interested the said Miss Jane Bruff in his favour—barring always, as I have before said, any absurdity about love at first sight, or rather second sight—as was the case in the affair under discussion.

The carriage rolled its onward course, and neither Agamemnon nor Adonis came to themselves. The first blush of returning consciousness burst upon them when Sugar and Salt abruptly stopped at the colonel's door in Harley-street, a proceeding on their parts which brought the head of the gallant warrior in contact with his daughter's sinister cheek, and almost threw the slumbering suitor opposite, involuntarily into the arms of his destined bride.

“That'll do—that'll do,” said Bruff, as he valiantly exalted his head to the perpendicular, after the bump.

“Permit me,” said George, stepping out of the carriage and offering his hand to Jane; “uncommon slow—eh? where—the what is—the steamboat gone?”

Jane just touched the proffered arm, and lightly bounded into the house.

“Come, governor,” said George, who was entirely mystified as to his position and his companions; where are *you*? ”

“Here, here,” said the colonel; “but where are the ladies—h—what?”

Whereupon Sir George's servant stepped up to the door, and

hinted that his mater and the ladies were close behind, drawn up in Sir George's carriage to the *trottoir*.

"Ah! that'll do," said the colonel; "now—ch—now we will all be snug—ch—here you—draw off—before the other carriage—come—here." At which period the gallant officer felt it necessary to have recourse to the iron railings of his area to support himself with security.

Up drove the carriage, and great and many were the persuasions which Colonel Bruff endeavoured to articulate, to induce its inhabitants to renew the pleasures of the day; but George declaring that he must be off, and preferred walking, his worthy father undertook to set Lady Gramm and her poetical friend down, and Frank remaining where he was, the party separated, after perhaps the most unsatisfactory expedition—except that of Walcheren—that ever was undertaken.

Of course George drifted down to Crockford's, where he concealed himself in the morning-room, doing duty for the evening ones at that season, and gave a description of the Greenwich affair, which would have remained unquestioned, had not his exemplary parent arrived about three-quarters of an hour later, to qualify the exaggerations of his incautious heir, and pronounce to the four or five London-bound stragglers who were present, "an uncommon pleasant day."

That somehow it had been, as the reader must plainly perceive, a dead failure, there could be no manner of doubt, and when morning came, both Sir George and his son—that is, his elder son—were perfectly *d'accord* on the subject. Then they repented and hesitated as to what was next to be done. For neither had Jane exhibited the slightest preference, nor shown the slightest attention to our hero; nor had our hero done any thing in the way of ingratiating himself with Jane. In fact, upon a reconsideration of the proceedings, they mutually reproached each other with having, they scarcely knew why, exhibited a *coup manqué*.

Jane, on their arrival at home, hastened towards her room, tremblingly alive to the usual readiness of Lady Gramm and her literary shadow, to accept any invitation under any circumstances, and join a little "sociability" at any hour of the night, knowing, with the colonel in his *then* state, what the scene would inevitably be. She paused on the staircase, to satisfy herself of the results of his efforts to make up a little "snuggery," and never did the sweetest tones of Grisi or Persiani sound more harmoniously in her ear, than did the roll and rattle of the wheels which bore away the threatened visitors. She continued her course upwards, and immediately surrendered herself to the *petits soins* of Miss Harris, so as to prevent any further discussion with papa, whose activity of mind and body were certainly not improved by his Greenwich discipline, and who, without even requiring the presence of Jane, wound up his evening with a

glass of something comfortable, administered in the back dining-room by the hand of Mrs. Smylar—with whom it is just probable he might have discussed the events of the day, not excluding from his calculations the exceedingly unprofitable outlay of his seventeen pounds nine shillings and eleven pence.

Whatever might have been the nature and character of the colonel's parley with the housekeeper, or whatever the declarations which, in the then peculiarly candid state of what he called his mind, he might have made upon the occasion, it is certain that from this very evening (or morning as it was, before they parted), that amiable and respectable personage began to play a part with "Jane" (as she called her), in which she had never appeared before, and which contrasted itself strangely and longly with the course of conduct which she had up to that period pursued. "When the wine is in, the wit is out;"—so says the proverb; and with some men the wit is *never* out till the wine is in. But the colonel's wit was of a different sort from Mr. Smylar, that had better have been kept in; for, as the reader will probably hereafter see, whatever it *was* that he did was upon that hint she afterwards spake.

CHAPTER IX.

As we have accompanied what may now almost be considered "family party" to Greenwich, it would be somewhat tautologous to submit to the reader the contents of Jane's letter to her dear Emma, describing the particulars of that excursion; we must wait for Emma's answer, in which we may, perhaps, be enlightened as to her opinions and advice connected therewith.

Sleepy as the graceful yet much bemused George was on the morning after the return, he was, soon after two, at Bruff's door; but crossed not the threshold. Of this exclusion the young gentleman bitterly complained, and Jane was consequently lectured severely by her father; but with that firmness of good purpose, and consciousness of right feeling, which distinguished all her proceedings, she vindicated the order she had given to exclude him, upon her evidently well-grounded objections to receiving his visits, or those of any other man, without the protection and sanction which the presence of a *chaperon* alone could afford. As usual, Bruff sneered at her "nonsense," as he called it, and ended a violent scolding by the assurance that it was no use for her to give herself airs, or evade his determination, for that she should receive and encourage the attentions of Mr. George Grindle; and that if by *her* orders he was to be left out-

side of the door, she would soon find herself by *his* orders in a similar position.

"Really, my dear father," said Jane, "I ask nothing extraordinary—I refuse to do nothing which is compatible with the decorum of society and the usages of persons in that class of life to which we belong. I do not feel it right—nay, I cannot consent—to admit a person of Mr. Grindle's avowed character and principles, after an acquaintance of three days, to a familiarity which I never yet permitted to those whom I have known much longer, and I may say, liked much better."

"Ah! that'll do," said the colonel; "there it is—'people you have liked much better'—I know it—with all your meekness, and prudence, and wisdom, you have engaged yourself to somebody else."

"My dear father," said Jane, "have I not told you over and over again—"

"Yes," said the colonel; "but I don't believe it—nothing but a previous attachment could bind you to the merits of this fine young fellow—devoted to you—anxious to win your heart—and you order the door to be shut in his face, when he calls to inquire after you."

"I am quite sensible of his kindness," said Jane, "and thankful for his inquiries; but as for his devotion, I must think you are endeavouring to persuade two people into an affection for each other, of which neither of themselves have the slightest idea. Mr. Grindle was fast asleep during the whole of the way home."

"Well, what then?" said Bruff; "so was I."

"That perhaps is a still stronger fact against *him*," said Jane somewhat archly, and not quite forgetting, even if she had forgiven, the disregard of her, which the nap of Adonis had practically exhibited.

"Well," said Colonel Bruff, "one word is as good as a thousand—I don't mean to hurry on the affair needlessly—and I don't want to force your inclinations; but you must eventually marry George Grindle—it is an affair settled."

"And yet, sir," said Jane, "you do not mean to force my inclinations!"

"No, I do not," replied Bruff; "give George Grindle fair play—see him—talk with him—let him visit us as I wish him to visit us; and I'll swear that at the end of a fortnight, your inclinations towards him will require no forcing."

"Indeed! my dear father," said Jane—

"That'll do—that'll do," interrupted the gallant and disagreeable officer; "you know when I say a thing I mean it—do you refuse to make the experiment?"

"I should feel myself an exceedingly undutiful child," said Jane, "if I refused to obey you to the utmost extent of my power. I certainly will not insist upon Mr. Grindle's exclusion;

but, as a girl brought up and educated with certain notions of delicacy and propriety, I will firmly refuse to admit Mr. Grindle to a succession of morning visits, unless, as I have already said, under the sanction and protection of some female friend."

"That'll do," said Bruff, "perhaps you are right—I'd stay with you myself all the time he was here, but then you wouldn't talk, and he'd think much the same of you as I do. Why don't you ask the Amershams here? She'd play propriety beautifully."

"Their happy home," said Jane, the tears ready to start to her eyes, "is full of friends."

"Full of friends!" said Bruff; "it must be an uncommonly small villa then; besides, if she is such a very particular friend of yours, they would perhaps throw over the others to oblige you."

"I could not ask or expect such a sacrifice," said Jane.

"Well then," said the colonel, who, although obliged to admit the propriety and validity of Jane's objection, thought it possible to convert his acquiescence into a means of carrying a point which Mrs. Simylar had long urged upon him, of promoting her to the rank of humble companion to his daughter: "well then—would Simylar—that is, mightn't she be in the room, working or—"

"I do not feel," said Jane, "that the association of your housekeeper with your daughter, would tend to increase Mr. Grindle's respect or esteem for a lady, whose fate and fortune he seems determined to share. Indeed, indeed, my dearest father, you had better abandon the design altogether. What the world calls love, in the lover's sense of the word, I have never yet felt; but I know enough of human nature, to know that it never can be compelled. I know, too, that there are certain persons whom I never could love; because the love which I believe to be the pure and genuine affection whence all happiness is derivable, must be founded on esteem: now really and truly, I never could esteem Mr. George Grindle."

"Oh! never," said the colonel, "never esteem Mr. George Grindle—that'll do—perhaps you could find it in your heart to esteem Mr. Francis Grindle—eh?"

"I might," said Jane: "because, from the little I have seen of either, I prefer his manners and conversation to those of his brother; but the question I want to ask, my dearest father, is, why force me to think of either of them?—a week since I was not aware of their existence; I was living quietly and happily in an agreeable circle, when I am suddenly summoned to—"

"To the dull society of an odious father," interrupted the colonel; "you have made that pleasant and dutiful observation more than once since your return. Now I will tell you why I urge you to see and think of—to love, or if not to love, at least

to marry, Mr. George Grindle :—his father and I are agreed on it—you will be settled—titled—well-jointed and comfortable—there can't be a nicer match—all my care and responsibility, as far as you are concerned, will be over, and I shall be all snug and at ease."

Jane saw before her in this anticipated snugness of her father, the completion of his scheme with the lady whom, in the plenitude of his parental care and delicacy, he had suggested "as the lady in white muslin," to his only daughter; and she felt entirely satisfied that the urgency of the proceeding connected with the sacrifice of her happiness was grounded upon the increasing importunities of Smylar, to induce, perhaps compel the colonel into doing that, which Jane always apprehended he had, in some serious and tangible shape, promised that artful and artificial woman to do,—namely, to quiet the scruples she affected to feel as to "appearances," by marrying her.

"Well," said Bruff, after having walked to the window, and looked out in silence on the stables at the back of the house for a minute or two, "I'll make a bargain with you—you shall not be forced, provided you will give George what I call a fair hearing. Many a time prejudices taken at first sight have worn off. I have known several couples who have lived for years, 'until death did them part,' comfortably and happy as any people in the world, who began by indifference if not dislike; while, *per contra*, I have seen half a score love-matches turn out dead failures, and as many more elopements, which ended in the lady's running away *from* the man, whom she had in the first instance run away *with*."

"Whatever may be my personal feelings or convictions," said Jane,—"and after having expressed them, I do not feel that I have any right to refuse what you now ask me,—as friends of yours, I consider it my duty to receive any person you may select, and therefore upon the conditions for which I stipulate, I shall of course not object to Mr. Grindle's visits; but unless those conditions are granted, I must refuse to obey."

Whether the propriety and reasonableness of his daughter's stipulation made their own effect upon the colonel, or whether Mrs. Smylar, who either might have anticipated the suggestion, or heard of Jane's feelings upon the point through Miss Harris, had advised him to concede the point, we cannot venture to guess; but certainly the gallant and disagreeable officer received his daughter's ultimatum, and did not answer hastily—nor did he swear—in fact he listened to her, and when she had done, contracted his brows, compressed his lips, and threw what he imagined a "considering" expression into his unmeaning countenance. After a pause, he said,

"Well—but—then supposing—that—who could you get to come and stay with you?—I ask nothing unreasonable—perhaps you are right—eh?"

"Town is so empty, one has no great choice of acquaintances," said Jane; "and so dull, that one scarcely dare venture to invite any body into it."

And then they held council. Various persons were suggested; but one was at Leamington, another at Harrowgate, a third at Carlsbad, and so on, until the consultation terminated with the resolution of asking Miss Pheezle to pass a few days with her "young friend." Miss Pheezle, odious to everybody except when her little services in the way of chaperoning and accidental appointment-makings were required, was particularly disagreeable to Jane; but there seemed no alternative, and as Jane had made her conditions, and they had been acceded to, she felt bound to fulfil her part of the contract; and accordingly a sweet-smelling, shining, and aptly-embossed note was despatched to the blue bore, as the wags called her, soliciting in gentle phraseology, the *pleasure* of her company for a few days. So goes the world! As for the answer, Miss Pheezle's character was two well known to render its tenour in the slightest degree doubtful. She was known, in spite of all her failings, to be a most attaching person—that is to say, she would fasten herself upon any body who gave her the slightest hint that way, and had only quitted her dear friend Lady Gramm that morning, because her ladyship was going on a visit to some friends in the country. This was a happy coincidence, and Miss Pheezle did not hesitate to avail herself of it; and accordingly, in reply, expressed the great happiness she should feel in accepting Miss Bruff's kind invitation.

So far then has propriety been satisfied, and Jane, in one respect, conciliated. Besides which, the colonel announced his intention of dining at home every day, for the purpose of receiving Sir George and his son, or his son alone, varying the society when he was able, by the introduction of other occasional visitors.

He now considered matters *en train*; and uncongenial as were the feelings of Jane and her coming companion, she felt more at ease in the prospect of an associate; for, besides having the effect which she so judiciously and properly intended it should have, it would rid her of the conversation of Mrs. Smylar, who, although her intrusions had been, since Jane's return to London, less frequent than before, still was in the habit of conversing with her in a manner which Jane could neither check nor correct, but which gave her considerable uneasiness.

The history of the next few days presented nothing very remarkable. George generally passed an hour or two in Jane's society; sometimes he came to luncheon, retiring when she ordered the carriage, and returning to dinner. Miss Pheezle pronounced him a "delightful creature," and Jane gradually, as time flew, or rather (with her) lagged, began to find her first impressions daily strengthen, and her first feelings of dislike to-

wards him confirm themselves in her mind; as indeed, if he had any perception, or rather if he had chosen to see things as they were, he could not have failed to discover. Still the fathers proceeded systematically in canvassing and considering the best arrangements; and although there did not appear the smallest increase of approximation between the principals, it was evident that the elders looked upon it as a settled thing.

Under these conflicting circumstances, and entertaining not the most affectionate regard for Miss Pheezle, and feeling an instinctive dread of Mrs. Smylar, whose *tone*, upon the subject she could have no great difficulty in anticipating, Jane had but one friend and counsellor. In Emma Amersham she naturally reposed perfect confidence; upon her judgment, she placed implicit reliance. The following letter from her in answer to one or two, the contents of which, knowing her feelings and opinions, we can easily imagine, will serve to show her views of the greatest hardship. Little did poor Jane fancy the wretchedness which another being, who really loved the object of her dislike, doomed to suffer by the completion of the scheme which was to ensure her own misery.

"Dear Jane,

"Your two last letters have caused me very great uneasiness. Surely your father will not thus rashly, and I must say harshly, insist upon this match! What can he expect from such compulsion? As you justly say in your letter of Tuesday, if you were in bad circumstances, or in a doubtful position in society, the precipitation with which the colonel seems to be acting might be, in some degree, justified, but as *you* are situated, where can be the necessity of forcing your inclinations with regard to any particular person, or indeed of driving you into marriage at all?

"You tell me that this Mr. Grindle is odious to *you*, although he is what is called an extremely popular person in some circles. You admit that he is good-looking, has seen a good deal of the world, and although his conversation is superficial and frivolous, it is not altogether unentertaining. These admissions, Jane, go a considerable way to induce me to think that somebody more intellectual, more agreeable, and more accomplished has obtained possession—if not of your heart—at least of your very particular friendship; which with *me*, having no faith in Platonics, nearly approaches a feeling and sentiment which, to a young lady in your peculiar position, it might not be right or prudent to name.

"You speak somewhat glowingly of the brother, Francis; but dear Jane, if I know you as well as I think I do, the duration of your acquaintance with him has not been sufficiently long to fix your affections, or even your thoughts, in that quarter, especially as you tell me he is gone abroad, or somewhere—you not having

the courage, as you say, to ask whither. This, I confess, is odd, and symptomatic of a sensitiveness which is natural to love. Still, if he is really gone, you must have had fewer opportunities of judging of his merits, than have been afforded you of considering the qualities of the brother. How is this, Jane?

"As for the subject of my constant anxieties, Miles Blackmore—don't be angry at my mentioning his name—he leaves us on Thursday. You have a great deal to answer for;—he is going, he says, to the continent, but I think he scarcely knows what his destination is to be. I really disclaim all desire to excite any mutinous or rebellious feeling in your bosom; but since you have been gone, his anxiety, his silence, his almost sullenness have gradually increased, and the only sounds in which he seems to take delight, are those of the chords with which you ended that beautiful song of Moore's—

‘Has sorrow thy young days shaded?’

Rely upon it, Jane, you are making a martyr of a man who deserves to live and confer happiness on her whom he loves, and who would reciprocate his affection. Why not, my dear girl, tell your father at once the state of your heart?—why not admit *that* which I know to be true? It is said that from your lawyer, or your physician, you should conceal nothing; from your father, under such circumstances as yours, concealment would be equally fatal. Shall I be the negotiator?—Give me powers—let me begin with a protocol by return of post. Do not sacrifice your happiness for ever on earth to any hesitation or fear. Rely upon it the colonel, with such a prospect, and with such a son-in-law, would yield to your wishes—why should he not?

"You tell me that you believe his object is to get you married and out of the way, without considering too much the character of the young gentleman who is to receive you in his arms. The title you think an object—how very absurd! In fortune, I am sure that Miles Blackmore ranks before Mr. Grindle or his father. Let me persuade, let me entreat you, be candid—make one bold move, and do upon this occasion what you invariably do upon all others—tell the truth.

"I know, my dear Jane, what you patiently endure, living entirely with an austere father, full of military prejudices, and imbued with the strongest possible idea of implicit obedience to his commands; and I can quite understand that under this *régime*, a sharp word, or a scowling look from the colonel, is quite sufficient to awe you into silence and submission. But do consider how different this case is. A father has a perfect right to watch over his daughter—over her conduct—over her intercourse with the world; and if he sees, or thinks he sees her falling into the snares of men unsuited by rank or fortune to her position or circumstances, no doubt can be entertained that he is wise in

checking her in a career which, with all its blandishments, might prove eventually ruinous. But your case is wholly different. Thrown more immediately under his *surveillance* by the early loss of your mother, I can perfectly account for that timid, shrinking manner which characterizes your conduct while in his presence, and even for the readiness which, to a certain extent, you have already evinced in the present affair, to meet his views. But there is a time when this passive obedience should be qualified; and that time has now arrived. If you had, in spite of his iron-bound dominion—the likeliest course in the world to have drawn you to it—fixed your affections upon such a person as I have just supposed, you might dread a confession, and even go to the altar with a broken heart, rather than risk the displeasure of an arbitrary parent. But you have done no such thing;—the man who—mark my words, Jane—who loves you—who is devoted to you—happy only in your presence, and miserable now you are away—is a gentleman—a gentleman of fortune—and if he have not a title—which, as I have over and over again told you, at least in sound, may be obtained by presenting a city address, and sometimes by fraud, quackery, or chicanery—has a heart and mind to love and cherish his wife, and place her, as the source of his pride and the cause of his happiness, in the very best sphere of society. Can you hesitate for a moment?

"I know what you will answer—that Miles Blackmors has never given you any reason to suppose yourself an object of interest in his eyes—that he has shunned you at some times when you fancied he might have sought you, and that when opportunities have offered at table, and in the evenings, for his entering into conversation with you—and you know, Jane, how much you enjoyed his conversation—he sat near you—next you—and remained silent, or merely confining himself to dull commonplaces; apparently, as you have said, unwilling even to look at you. Oh! Jane, Jane, innocent as you are, you know that these are all marks of deep and settled affection—of a devotion wholly unlike the superficial flatteries or gaieties of worldly men. Jane, I know he loves you. Be candid. Tell me—me, your second self—what are really *your* feelings towards him? No time is to be lost—you are on the edge of a precipice. It seems as if a few days would seal your fate. Three days terminate his visit here. Why should he leave us? He was engaged for six weeks to us. But he goes. He hears of your protracted stay from us, and although I 'named no names,' as the old gentlewomen say, I hinted at the cause of your absence, and then abruptly ends his visit.

"For him, Jane, I will pledge myself—what say you? Only tell me—only accredit me as your minister—and I will undertake to upset all the Grindle treaty in three days.

"I never saw your *chaperon* but once, and I own I then thought her odious. The mere fact of an ugly old woman fancying herself handsome and young, is, as times go, really nothing; n.

does such a delusion at all annoy one. But when such a woman turns authoress, and inflicts poetry upon us, and goes the whole length of repeating herself, it is more than mortal can endure. However, you were perfectly right in your resolution about your morning visitors, and I have no doubt she thinks so.

"Now let me beg of you to write by return of post, and tell me what I may say, and what I may do; for I shall not sleep till I am in 'office.'

"Our party is getting thinner. I told you of the ball, which turned out excessively dull—at least I was dull, and probably thought every body was in the same humour. The great House was particularly gracious, and we were all invited, *en masse*, to a sort of *déjeuner dinatoire* on Thursday; and there was archery; and the two girls from Hastings were exceedingly smart, dressed in green, with hats, and feathers, and quivers, and all the paraphernalia of toxopholitism (if there be such a word); and Grace—as the ugly one is called—won a gold bracelet by hitting the target accidentally, and was carried about in triumph. As for Jemisetta, the younger sister, who shot as they said second best it seemed to me that she thought more of the *beaux* than arrows. Forgive my pun, which you will no doubt despise. pleased my husband, who repeated it with as much zest as if were new.

"But now, Jane—to conclude—do what I ask—what I command—and let me hear instantly. Mark my last words—do not marry to break your own heart, especially when by so doing you will break the heart of another!—Yours affectionately,

"EMMA.

"My husband desires his kindest regards. Mr. Miles Blackmore, who is at my elbow, desires to be *particularly* remembered."

Now, what the gentle Jane Bruff said in answer to this, we are not yet able to inform the reader, because certain circumstances necessarily intervene which carry him to the cottage on the Regent's Park bank, whither he has not been conveyed for some eight or ten days.

If the reader bears in mind the sweetness of Ellen's character,—or, as he may best remember her by George's familiar appellation of Nelly,—the acuteness of her feelings, the peculiarity of her position (and of that he yet knows little), he must be perfectly sure that the continued, or rather continuous absence of George from her once happy domicile, could not fail to keep alive—ay, and in living agony—the anxiety which the dialogue already recorded in these pages first excited. Day passed after day, and to be sure George visited her, and his once darling "y; but not once had he dined there, as was his wont, especially that season of the year. If he slept "at home," as he had "ways called it, till within a few short days, his rest was dis-

turbed, and although strong drinks were called, unusually for him, into play, to induce sleep, he would wake, and in his half-living, half-dreaming state, words incoherent and incomprehensible by the watchful, wakeful Ellen, would pass his lips. Now and then an oath was muttered, and then came a deep-drawn sigh. Fallen as he was,—or rather falling,—he could not break such ties as those which bound him to Ellen, without some compunctionous visitations.

The dear, innocent, deluded girl—yes, reader, innocent and deluded; and here you may pause to wonder.—Rely upon it Ellen is an object fitted to attract your tenderest affections—to excite your deepest interest—and in spite of all appearances, you may indulge in the kindest feelings of esteem, of sympathy, and of sorrow for her fate, without violating in the slightest degree the strictest propriety of the moral world:—and herein lies the mystery of Ellen.

The dear, innocent, deluded girl, we say, saw the misery and excitement of him who to her was dearest—the first and only love of her heart—the father of her darling boy. She traced all his feverish restlessness to his new addiction to drinking at night; to his losses at play; and to the an sterity of his father, the partner and accomplice of his vice. The idea—even after the conversation we have formerly witnessed, as to her temporary removal to the continent—that they were on the eve of eternal separation, and that for the sake of another woman, preferred from mercenary motives—never took root in her mind. And yet, considering that George had a good many friends who admired the beautiful Ellen, and who might have found opportunities for communicating the real facts to her, it is somewhat strange that in this age of excessive refinement and purely disinterested friendship, none of his own “particular and immediate” cronies had, for obvious reasons, let her into the secret. So it was, however, and within what the parties most deeply concerned considered a fortnight of his marriage with Miss Jane Bruff, Ellen believed herself the only beloved object of her dear George, and her heart bled to think that she was the cause of the variance which he taught her to think existed between him and his exemplary father.

“Are we to go to France?” said Ellen at breakfast, from which the child, as it had always been during his later visits, was excluded.

“You must, Nelly,” said George, “and I have written to mamma to say so. But I don’t see how I can lift *myself* over. Only you are so particular about going alone.”

“No, George,” said Ellen, “I am *not* particular. You know you have only to say you wish it, and I will do it; but I confess I should prefer returning to my mother under your care. I could so much better explain the reasons why I was forced for a time to part from you.”

“Ha, ha,” said George, swinging himself backwards and for-

wards in his chair, "and do you think it is worth my going all that way to vouch for the explanation? Mamma will believe you, Nelly, whether I am there or not. However, don't cry about it—I dare say we shall manage it somehow."

"Oh, George! dear George!" said Ellen, "you did not use to speak so of my dear mother, in other days. What has she, or what have I done to cause this change in your manner?"

"Nothing, dear," said George, "nothing—only you see—I don't quite comprehend what is best for us—being, as I have already said, entirely stumped; and the governor, as usual, looking uncommon blue. I don't quite calculate the means for my trip to Paris; or, as I said when I first hinted it, how I shall get there and back again without being missed? However, I suppose it must be."

"Then," said Ellen, "hadn't I better begin to make preparations?"

"Wait a day or two, Nelly," said George, who, in all probability, had knowledge of the world, and perception enough to induce him to mistrust the entirety of his success with Jane; "it may be, my dear girl, that we shan't have to flit at all, as they say in Scotland—only to be sure it's best to be ready."

To this readiness the gentle Ellen had long pledged herself; but since the first blush of his proposition, several, to *her* end tedious days had passed, during which she had seen but little of him, until, with all the worst forebodings of some coming evil upon her mind, the agonies of suspense were even more torturing than the actual infliction of the blow which he had prepared her to expect.

"When, dearest George," said she, "when will you know to a certainty the course it will be best to pursue?"

"That's it," said George, "that's the puzzle—and when I do know—then how to manage it. Sometimes I think it would be a good plan to let the governor into the whole history, and bring him here to dine with us. I know you'd like him,—he is a capital chap in every way but one,—I mean as a father,—in regard of that, he is a regular screw—but he is a boy, for his age, deucedly fond of children. Who knows but he might take a fancy to Tiney, and do something for him as he grows up? As for you—I know he'd be delighted with you; but then—'gad, I don't see—'"

"How truly happy," said the innocent Ellen, "should I be if such a reconciliation should take place!—how our hearts and minds would be relieved!—we might contribute to *his* happiness, and his sanction would secure *ours*. There would be an end to our mysterious, restless life, and we should be received and acknowledged in the world. I should make an excellent daughter-in-law, George," added she smiling.

"Yes," said George, drawing his hand across the lower part of his face to conceal the sarcastic sneer that curled his lip. "You have

settled it uncommon well, Nelly ; but you are going ahead a little too fast—I don't think the governor would stand that exactly."

" I only spoke as you directed my thoughts," said Ellen. " You gave me hopes of the possibility of a reconciliation."

" Why, yes," said George again, his mind being evidently occupied with some new, and probably to *her*, unmentionable project; " but not exactly in that manner—however, a week at furthest will set the question at rest; and rely upon it, old lady, your interests are nearest my heart—whatever happens, all shall go well with you."

" Bless you, George—dearest George !" said the devoted girl, seizing his hand and covering it with her kisses.

Her warmth of kindness caused an involuntary shudder through George's frame. Callous as he was, could he see such a return of implicit confidence to calculating hypocrisy, without trembling even at his own duplicity?—Resolved as he was at the moment of that endearment, to cast off for ever the dupe of his artifices, and the victim of his villainy, the force of nature could not withstand the shock of such an appeal. She saw the emotion but mistook the cause, and pitied her destroyer in proportion to her love for him.

" Stay here to-day, George," said Ellen; " you have not dined at home for eight days—there is nobody in town to keep you so much engaged."

—“ Yes,” said George, “ my father—my father is in town.”

“ But your brother is in town too,” said Ellen.

“ No—he is not,” answered George, “ he is gone somewhere, I don't exactly know where. Besides, if he were, he is no society for the governor, who is detained in London by some law business with an old colonel somebody, and gets bored to death, and would die without me. But I shall be home early in the evening, and perhaps shall be able to tell you more about his conditions concerning me and my arrangements.”

“ Is your friend, Mr. Ashford, gone to France ? ” said Ellen.

“ Started the day before yesterday,” said George. “ I thought, he had made a hit with you, Nelly—deuced fine fellow? When I write I shall tell him that you asked after him.”

“ I asked after him,” said Ellen, “ in hopes of hearing the news of him which you have given me. I know he is your friend, and exactly such a friend of yours as I should wish to avoid. He being gone, my journey to Versailles, if you consider it must be made, loses half its terrors.”

“ He is a formidable creature ! ” said George.

“ Don't let us talk about him, George,” replied Ellen; “ I hope with all my heart I may never see him again.”

“ *Cela dépend*,” said George, “ if he should pitch his tent at Versailles, you may meet; and I don't think, unless, you give him a very bad character indeed, mamma will shut her door against him, for wherever he goes he takes the lead.”

"Perhaps," said the poor girl, looking intently in George's face, "perhaps the day may never come."

It were useless to keep the reader longer witness to this scene of confidence and duplicity, which was protracted after the return of Tincey with his maid from their walk, until it was time for George to get home and dress for dinner at his intended father-in-law's.

During the course of that morning, Sir George, whose anxiety for dispatch in the negotiation between himself and Bruff was considerably whetted by the progressive urgency of claimants upon his attention in the way of pecuniary engagements, and who had for himself and his son already done every thing that could be done in the way of protracting, appeasing, and even in some instances commuting and compounding, had pressed upon the colonel the wisdom of bringing affairs speedily to a crisis--at least as far as in expression of Jane's sentiments was concerned. The colonel was as desirous as Sir George, but doubted whether it would not be wiser to let the acquaintance between Jane and her lover continue a little longer, pledging himself to the peremptory exercise of his paternal authority if she eventually refused her consent, and expressing his unalterable resolution, that she should marry as he chose, even if she were dragged to the altar.

To this exceeding violence of resolve, the colonel had been stimulated by Mrs. Smylar, whose determination to get rid of Jane, at all hazards, the reader has before seen, but who now felt armed with a double power, by a course of conduct which she had laid down for her own observance, and which, when the time arrived for its development, would place the innocent Jane in a position she could never have anticipated, and without some almost miraculous interference, bring about the consummation of Mrs. Smylar's scheme by one of two means scarcely yet imaginable by the reader.

It was on this same day when two or three moves were made by the Elders in the Harley-street game of matrimonial chess, that Jane answered the letter which she had received from Mrs. Amersham, and which the reader has already seen. As the most illustrious woman of her day once said, when advocating judicial impartiality, "What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander," and upon her most "wise and upright" principle, it seems that as Mrs. Amersham's letter to Emma has been subjected to the public eye, so no good reason exists why Jane's answer to Mrs. Amersham should not be submitted in a similar manner. Here it is.

" Harley-street, ——, 18—.

" My dear Emma,

" Your letter has cheered and alarmed me. As you too truly say, my position is perilous; and, as you know, I have nobody

here to confide in or trust to. But, dearest Emma, you are wrong—completely and entirely wrong in attributing my fixed—yes, fixed and unalterable, at least as I now feel and think—objection to the proposed match, to any predilection for *your* friend Mr. Miles Blackmore.

“Surely, as I have said a thousand times to you upon this subject, it is quite possible for a woman to admire talent, and be pleased with wit, edified by wisdom, and charmed with accomplishments in a man, without necessarily being in love with him. Men seem to me to think not, and hence the great difficulty to young women in expressing feelings, either verbally or practically, by associating with and enjoying the society of men whom they really do esteem, and are delighted with as companions, without the slightest combination in their feelings of what is called love, and which I do not remember ever to have felt.

“You do an equal injustice, rely upon it, to poor Mr. Blackmore. You attribute, after your fashion, dearest—to a deep-rooted affection, and the diffidence which true love imparts, what I consider perfect indifference in the way of love. Taking his feelings upon your own principle, I am fully prepared to admit, in the plenitude of my vanity, that Mr. Miles Blackmore is interested about me—nay, I am sure he is. I believe that he would do me any service which might lie in his power—I go the whole length even of imagining that he would jump into a river to save me from drowning, or hazard life and limb in an attempt to stop my runaway horse. But all this is, I am sure, not connected with love. I hope so, sincerely, Emma, for with all my regard and esteem for Miles Blackmore, I never could—no never—accept him as a husband.

“As he is the dearest friend of Mr. Amersham, and consequently, I presume, a great favourite of yours, I shall say much less than I feel upon that point; but I must just record my opinion that there is something preying on his mind—some mystery—which, let it be ever or never discovered, renders him to me, as I have over and over again told you, an object—I can scarcely say of distrust—but of something like apprehension. Let it be what it may which interests me,—and I do not deny the interest,—it is as little like love, if love be what I think it to be, as you can with all your superior knowledge possibly imagine.

“But this is, as you will easily perceive, a secondary consideration. You speak of my doing that which I have no inclination—no intention—no power to do. What I return and recur to is the conduct I *must* inevitably pursue, and that within a very short time, with regard to Mr. George Grindle. It is here that I seek your advice. It is quite clear now, that this man, for some reason—what, as you most properly ask in your letter, I cannot at all comprehend—is to be my husband. The fate seems inevitable, and I do assure you that with the most per-

fect and incessable contempt for his character, his principles, and his pursuits, death would be preferable !

" How strange is it, dear Emma, that men do not appear to sympathize with us in feelings of this sort ! A man, if he marries a pretty girl who accepts him, she scarcely knows why, except that she is asked, makes up his mind to love her, and, I suppose, does love her, probably because she is handsome, or for some other reason equally good. But a woman—at least I speak for myself, and I am a woman now—looks to the man she marries for a companion whom she can attach to herself—whose interests are her own, and to whom it will be her duty as well as inclination, to afford every comfort, and, even counsel if required. On the contrary, a man like this Mr. Grindle, comes prepared to be accepted, evidently scorning all advice and wholly insensible to the only permanent attractions of a wife. In fact, Emma, with all his pretensions he is a fool—there's the truth.

" His brother Frank, of whom I have before written to you, improved upon acquaintance; in truth he was the only redeeming point of our Greenwich dinner; but he has left town. He seems, as I before told you, full of intelligence and accomplishment; but he neither has, nor will have, a title, for which, all at once, my dear extraordinary father appears to have taken a most desperate liking. Never mind, Emma—let what may happen, upon one thing I *am* resolved—I will *not* marry Mr. George Grindle. This sounds bold and rebellious, as far as my father is concerned. But I have tried, I have struggled to try and like him, and I cannot. Nor can the dreadful wrigglings of old Miss Pheezle, our poetess, who looks like an ill-kept munkey just emancipated from its ill-made case, induce me to consider him more favourably; although he, fancying that because she is here as *chaperon* she has some influence over me, is exceedingly kind to her, and permits her to repeat some of her wretched verses, which have appeared during the last month in a low magazine.

" Sir George, with whom we dined yesterday, is quite a different person from his son. Looking not much older, and, as I before told you, full of anecdote and playful conversation, he is greatly his superior in every attraction. Why Frank Grindle left town I have never been able exactly to ascertain. He told me something of an invalid friend at Leamington. Nobody speaks of him. He is gone—and—I know, dear Emma, you will laugh at me—I never have courage to ask any body about him. But I do *not* think he is at Leamington. Perhaps you will say, why should I care about him at all ? I can scarcely answer the question. But probably the interest I feel has been created by the compulsory course pursued by my father, and the effect of the contrast produced by the introduction of the two brothers.

" Now, then, dearest Emma, comes *the* question. I have admitted the difficulty of my position as you exhibit it to my eyes—

FATHERS AND SONS.

I peremptorily and decidedly deny—(and recollect, dear girl, this is between ourselves, unheard and unseen except by Him who sees and knows all things)—any, the slightest feeling of what I consider love for Miles Blackmore. Now then, how am I to act? —what am I to do? These are the questions I ask. I tell you I am sure that my father's intentions are to force my inclinations. Do I distress—do I annoy—do I pain you by simply begging you to give me advice?

"If I were to write to you and tell you that I was half driven to madness by the advent of the storm, I should write nonsense—it is no such thing. I look at the whole plan and design with the full stock of common sense and reason which God has given me. Advice as to the means of avoiding certain misery is, I confess, that which I want.

"Pray remember that my notion is, that a deep,—a much deeper plot than you may anticipate, or I comprehend, is at work. Mrs. Smylar does nothing but smirk. She courtesies to me, but abstains from conversation, is exceedingly civil to my mummy poetess, and I think has obtained an influence over my maid. Rely upon it that I am somehow surrounded and hemmed in; but rely upon it also, dearest Emma, that I will *not* marry George Grindle.

"They talked yesterday evening of jewels, and Sir George whispered something to Miss Pheezle, which sounded to my ears like 'Corbeille,' but she said nothing on the subject to me. Not that that signifies much; for if she fancied it suited her interests more to deceive me and lead me into any snare, she is just the creature who would do it. And yet, thanks to my poor father's primitive notions, she is the person I am obliged to select, to act the part of a mother, whose love and protection I never had the happiness of knowing.

"Write to me, dearest friend. Do tell me how best to avoid eternal misery; but above all, reject from your mind every thing connected with Mr. Miles Blackmore and myself.

"Of course it would be useless at this time of the year to press my father's invitation upon you to come to town. The grass is literally growing on the shady side of Cavendish-square, and why should you leave your dear happy home? Do not fail to write to me, and give my best regards—and, if you please, my kindest love—to your husband.

"Yours affectionately,
"JANE BRUFF."

Here come we to a plain, unvarnished, and confidential denial on the part of Jane, of any tender feeling towards the man whom he considers the "mysterious" Miles Blackmore; the reader therefore, can have no doubt of *her* sincerity. But it does not follow as a matter of course, that the deep interest which I cannershamb thinks, and we firmly believe, is entertained by seems i,

Miles Blackmore in all Jane Bruff's proceedings, is so easily to be gotten rid of; all that is matter for after consideration and subsequent development. What seems up to this point of our history alone certain is, that however much Miles Blackmore might have engaged Jane's attention, however much he might have awakened the sympathy, however much he might have chained her ear, or charmed her mind, he had not touched her heart. To *that* point we have traced her; but much may follow which will place the charming, unsophisticated, amiable, innocent Jane in positions where Miles Blackmore may show himself somewhat differently in his bearing towards her. "*'Tis a mad world, my masters,*" says the title of an old play; and our fair and gentle Jane was destined to prove the truth of the apophthegm thus dramatically adopted.

But now as to Frank. He had absented himself from London. His Leamington friend had surprisingly recovered after Jane's bidding to Greenwich, and what it was that took him from London he could himself scarcely tell. He went, however; and as Jane admitted, she had not the courage to inquire whither. Frank was not blind to the perfections of Jane, or insensible of the impression he had artlessly and unintentionally made upon her. The Leamington history was changed for some other, after that brief and almost wordless interview in the Greenwich balcony, and Frank, mild, unassuming, and almost oppressed as he was, retired from the field—no one knew whither—at a time when his presence might have in some degree interfered with the action which was about to commence, and in which he felt it but too clear, he was to take no decided part.

During these proceedings in London, Mrs. Amersham consulted her husband, as far as she held it prudent, or indeed consistent with her estimation of that gentleman's intellectual qualities, touching the course he would recommend Jane to pursue; breaking to him only so much of the business in hand as she thought necessary, and putting wholly out of the question, in the present discussion, Mr. Miles Blackmore—who, strange to say,—and here come the wheels within wheels.—had always been considered a very great admirer of Mrs. Amersham herself. So goes the world, or as it is genteelly said, *ainsi va la monde*. Because Blackmore was Mr. Amersham's most intimate friend, and because Mrs. Amersham cherished the intimate friend of her husband, and treated him like a brother for her husband's sake,—the dearest of Mrs. Amersham's friends—in what may be called the acceptance of ordinary society—found out that Mrs. Amersham was exceedingly particular in her attentions to Mr. Miles Blackmore; indeed, every body, except Amersham himself, who knew his wife and her admirable qualities too well to entertain the slightest suspicion of the honesty of her friendship, or the purity of her mind, began to whisper, and wink, and make signs, and faces, whenever Miles Blackmore was selected to escort Mrs.

Amersham to table, or to the ball-room, or indeed to practise any of the innocent and inevitable manœuvres of pairing-off (which are generally supposed not to be of the negative character which distinguishes a joint parliamentary exit under the same term); and accordingly some starched ladies wondered how Mrs. Amersham could suffer *that* Mr. Blackmore so constantly in his house, and were quite confounded at the way in which Mrs. Amersham sometimes looked at him while listening to his conversation.

Now, here we have shown the contemptible absurdity of this scandal, which her neighbours and friends—ay, *friends* living in her own house with her—concocted. Here we have this excellent woman pressing upon her dearest *protégée*, the affections of this very Mr. Miles Blackmore; most naturally too, because Mrs. Amersham was in point of fact, by her mother's side, the nearest living relative our beautiful Jane had. Is not this enough, and more than enough, to silence the shameful, or rather shameless clamours which an opposite faction in the county had endeavoured to raise against Jane's best friend, and exhibit under her own hand an uncalled-for proof, and certainly an unpremeditated one, of her truth and sincerity?

Amersham, who to do him justice, or rather to do him no injustice, was no conjurer, but, as we have already depicted him, an exceedingly agreeable fellow, whose fortune placed him in the happy position of making his house agreeable, furnished above all things with a most charming wife,—was not exactly the man to advise in any emergency, especially where an affair turned upon a delicate point; a difficult one he might have mastered, but a delicate one was as far beyond his powers, as the construction of a chronometer is above the capacity of a Dutch clock-maker. He had what is called plain sense; he was that sort of living anomaly known as an “upright, downright, straightforward man”—a character scarcely reducible to the ratio of any practical art or science. But when his wife simply stated that Colonel Bruff proposed to marry Jane to somebody—no matter whom—against her will, Amersham exclaimed in a tone not to be described, and in words not to be written in these days of refinement, “I'll be *hanged* if he shall.”

Thus, as far as the principal went, at least, Emma had secured her husband's co-operation, and that was delightful to her. She fully appreciated the goodness of his heart, and rejoiced to find that she should have him “with her” in the remonstrating line against the colonel.

It was a curious coincidence, as people say, that on the very day following this discussion, sooner too than he meant to go, as we have seen by Emma's letter to Jane, Mr. Miles Blackmore announced his determination to take his departure; so that all the kindly efforts of Mrs. Amersham to awaken, what she firmly believed a sympathetic feeling in Jane's heart touching Black-

more, were unavailing: before Jane's letter arrived at the villa, Miles was gone.

All this looked odd, strange, and if we were romantically inclined, might conjure up very odd surmises. Alas! in these days of iron railroads, and steam-engines, romance perishes; as the advertisements in the newspapers say, time and space are annihilated, not to speak of a very considerable number of the passengers who avail themselves of the infernal machinery. Still romance is gone, fallen, never to rise again; and our mysterious friend, Mr. Miles Blackmore, before the arrival of Jane's repudiation, much to Mrs. Amersham's horror, had taken his departure by a railroad, the nearest station of which was conveniently situated within seven miles of Amersham's lodge-gates.

It is scarcely possible to describe the feelings which affected Emma Amersham, as Miles Blackmore quitted the house. Her agitation was evident, more especially to those dear friends who had previously made their observations upon her "particular" attentions to him. *Her* object was to have kept him at the villa till she received Jane's answer to her letter; but he was inexorable, and the moment he heard Amersham and his wife discussing the matrimonial scheme, which was to involve Jane's happiness or misery, he seemed by some unaccountable impulse driven away from their hospitable roof before the time previously fixed for his departure.

No matter—he is gone—Mrs. Amersham is destined to receive Jane's letter too late, and Jane is doomed to receive her father's mandate too soon.

CHAPTER X.

MONGST the various circumstances connected with the fate of poor Jane, as time wore on, and matters seemed drawing to a close, nothing struck her more forcibly than the total change in Smylar's manner towards her, which she had noticed in her letter to Emma. What she had expected and even continued to expect from that officious personage, was a powerful advocacy of the merits of Mr. George Grindle, and a persuasive furtherance of her father's object, that the half-endured and half-permitted familiarity with which she had always been in the habit of talking to her young mistress, would, as she felt, have justified. But—Smylar was more respectful than usual—graver than she ordinarily was, and scarcely exchanged a word with Jane.

The residence of Miss Pheezle in the house, and her constant association with Miss Bruff, might account, in a certain degree, for this change, inasmuch as Smylar had not the opportunities of *têtes-à-têtes*, which were so frequently afforded her when Jane

was at home and alone. But still volumes are to be expressed in a momentary glance; a monosyllable well emphasized will convey a world of meaning; but when Smylar, having occasion to receive directions from Jane, was (at least as a matter of form) forced to see and speak to her, and even while settling arrangements for the dinners made for George and his father, never did she permit the slightest allusion to the avowed objects of their constant visits to pass her lips, nor allow even a twinkle of her bright and intelligent eyes to betray the existence of a thought one way or another, upon the subject in her mind.

It seems strange that in mere ordinary domestic life, so much mystery and such combinations should be found; but we may rely upon it there is not a roof in London, or in any other part of the civilized world, which does not cover a history; and if the crust which keeps (in these days when no Asmodeus lives) all these matters secret, were broken, there is scarcely a family in the British empire, high, low, or middling, that would not present

“A dainty dish to set before a king.”

Amongst those who were puzzled and mystified in the affair, poor dear Mrs. Amersham was not the least troubled. Jane, virtually at issue with her father, applies to her affectionate friend and relation, Emma, for advice. What advice can she give? Had she been armed substantively with any specific proposition, it would have been altogether a different matter; that is to say, in plain language and few words, if Jane sanctioned her advocacy to Colonel Bruff of Miles Blackmore, upon whose marriage with Jane her whole heart was fixed, she felt she could have done so boldly and confidently, inasmuch as she should offer him a suitable match for his daughter, and suggest to him as a son-in-law, a man of whose good qualities, many accomplishments, and agreeable manners, she herself had the highest opinion. But no, of *that* Jane would not hear. What then was to be done? In public life, a man asking for “something” is likely to get nothing, because the application is vague, and applicants are innumerable; let him ask for something specific, and the difficulty is considerably decreased; because, although the man may not get the office, still the patron (if in these days there be such a thing) knows precisely what his suitor is at. If Mrs. Amersham could have pitted Blackmore against Grindle, it would have reduced the whole affair to a comparison between two eligible parties; but as it was, what had she to offer to Colonel Bruff as a *succedaneum* for his great project? Nothing—and therefore was she disappointed and disheartened.

It was odd enough, in the conduct of what might be called the negotiations between the houses of Bruff and Grindle, that the two principals seemed to take the least possible part. The “high-contingent powers” were the baronet and the colonel,

and George and Jane were, at the end of the probationary fortnight which had passed, much the same as they were before it began. However, a sudden break-off was destined to occur, and George was forced, without chance of escape, to leave Jane for at least a week—to return, however, more assiduous, and more energetic than before his departure. In fact, poor Ellen was to go; and without George she scarcely could have borne the journey. Besides, the worthy baronet having been quite enlightened on the leading points of the history, felt assured that his exemplary son ought to make that sacrifice, unless he thought that his volatile parent would transact the affair as well.

The approaching week or ten days was a period of particularly deep interest to Jane. It was during the absence of her accuser—why temporarily withdrawn she knew not—that she was to receive the advice of Emma Amersham; it was during that period when released from this, to *her*, odious attentions, she was to consider and calculate as to the adoption of the advice which might be proffered. During that period, Miss Pheezle engaged to go and stay with a marchioness, to whom she always went for a few days in the autumn, and during that period, consequently, Mrs. Smylie would have better and more frequent opportunities of talking to her young lady. But far away, and beyond these things, Sir George Grindle himself would have the gratification and delight of passing some of his evenings in the society of Jane, the insensibility to whose attractions, manifested by his son, filled him with wonder and astonishment.

To those who have made for themselves a little snuggeriness, who have—mean and low as it may sound to noble blood, or giant minds—trained round a casement, or over some little arbour, the pliant jasmine, or the fragrant eglantine—who have watched it with an almost tender care, and traced the progress of its growth—there is a pang in parting with such trifles, that the really worldly “wot not of.” Ellen, dear Nelly let us call her,—for so he called her when he loved her best,—when summoned to her departure from the cottage which had been to her the home of her affections, felt more than here can be described or told, at quitting all the poor and intrinsically worthless objects which, associated in her mind with her happiest hours, were to *her* invaluable.

For months she had marked the spread of some ivy which George had planted; it was her pride, her pleasure, to see it thrive and flourish; every leaf as it burst forth was connected with some event of some particular day. It was like parting from a friend to quit that—to others—trivial object, destined most probably to be swept away by the next comer as an unsightly nuisance.

But she was resigned. George told her—gentlemanly creature

that he was—that nothing but their temporary separation could save him from disinheritance and ruin—having nevertheless driven the father, whom he had represented as the tyrant destroyer of his happiness, to the corner of the road in his cab, and having set him down just before he reached the home which he was about to destroy; informing him that, if he chose, he might see the poor victim of his barbarity, by only waiting where he was, till *he*—the worthy son—should bring her out upon the little lawn for inspection.

The suspicion that Mr. George Grindle ever had an idea of transferring the affections of Nelly to the worthy baronet, if it could have been effected, is one more odious than we dare entertain. It is known that nephews have so favoured uncles, and that great results have followed. But in this case, even venturing to presume that the infamy of Mr. George Grindle could have suggested such baseness, the purity and excellence of Ellen were quite sufficient guarantees for its non-execution.

Nelly bore the announcement of the necessity of the break-up with firmness and calmness; but when the time came for tearing down and uprooting—there is no other word for it—her tender heart beat, and as each familiar object was thrust into boxes or baskets by unfeeling, because unconscious workmen, tears flowed from her once bright eyes; and when she saw her little nursery—where of late most of her only tranquil hours had been passed—dismantled, and despoiled of its furniture, she felt as none but mothers *can* feel, and as she had never felt before.

All this might have been spared her—but it was not. This furniture was to be sold—it need not have been touched till she was gone. A want of consideration rather than of feeling caused this devastation; for George Grindle, who was a man of the world, had no notion that any body could feel any thing like attachment to a table, or a chair, or a cradle, or a plant, or a shrub, from association; and therefore, when it was decided that an abdication should take place, the measure was carried into effect forthwith; and the morning after these demonstrations had been made, George, Ellen, and Tiney, with her maid in the ramble, were on their road to Dover.

With George, let it be where it might, Nelly was happy. The child, just of an age to be pleased and interested, was delighted with all he saw; and his mother, convinced that she was fulfilling a duty, was cheerful and almost happy. At the end of their journey she should see her mother and her relations, and although she had gladly given them all up for the sake of George, still, as it was for his advantage, she was to be temporarily separated from him, what a consolation it was that she was going to them!

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Jane, upon whom the invincible George had, during his siege, made not the slightest impression, felt greatly relieved by his absence: more especially as it permitted her to give her very detestable toady, the bepainted and bewigged poetess, leave of absence. Still his retirement produced an effect upon her which was really and truly unexpected; and that was, a most inordinate desire to know really and truly what had become of his brother; and in this anxiety there mingled more of reason and prudence than may be ordinarily found in such solicitudes. She had been told by her father that Frank Grindle had of himself a very considerable fortune expectant from his maternal uncle. She had been forced into a sort of family compact, the ends of which are very seldom answered. She certainly very much liked the one brother, and very much disliked the other. It appeared to her—looking at it in as worldly a light as a very young woman could—that if the Grindle family was a family into which her father wished her to marry, his objection to a younger brother, with a good fortune, could not be exceedingly strong; and as to the title, that was an affair of her own, about which she did not in the least care.

In fact it seemed to her—and this feeling had been, as we know, long before beaten into her mind by various circumstances—that her father's great object was to get her married. "Well then," thought Jane, "if that is to be, and Mrs. Smylar's advancement is to be the consequence, it will be infinitely better for me to meet my father's wishes, and at the same time become so far independent as not to find myself in my father's house the daughter-in-law of his impertinent house-keeper; but *George Grindle I cannot love.*"

But now of Mrs. Smylar. As soon as Miss Pheezele was gone, and Mr. George Grindle had taken a trip to Paris to "*see a sick relation,*" Mrs. Smylar resumed her usual playfulness of manner with Jane, and as the colonel and Sir George were wont to dine together at the Doldrum, Bruff not having eyes quick enough to see that the baronet not only would have been better pleased to dine in Harley-street, but quite ready, if he found it would do, to supplant his son in Jane's good graces—she had now her opportunities of holding gentle converse with her young lady.

Disappointed rather by the colonel's cessation of invitations to dinner while George was away, Sir George volunteered an offer of himself to make one of the family trio at the colonel's. The offer was accepted; he came, and made himself exceedingly agreeable, and Jane looked at him and wondered to herself how he could be the father of such a being as his eldest son; indeed, she became so happy in the absence of her tormentor, that she "plucked up a spirit," as the song says, and asked where "Mr. Francis" was.

"Gad," said Sir George, "there you puzzle me; for I declare, upon my honour, I have no notion where he is. If there happens

to be what they call a scientific meeting, or a great association for the advancement of general science, where they build stairs to save salmon the trouble of leaping, and proof beyond a doubt that Newcastle coals will burn if they are put upon a fire,—there, you may depend upon it, is Frank.—He thinks himself an uncommonly fine fellow, because he has got a letter of thanks on vellum for having sent to the Rumfimuskyfosky College at Moscow a white black-beetle."

"I was not aware," said Jane, "that he devoted himself to such abtruse studies."

"Abstruse," said Sir George, "absurd you mean, my dear Miss Bruff. Why, black-beetles are black-beetles—that is when they are not white—blue flies are blue flies—maggots, saving your presence, are maggots—fleas are fleas—well—and now—I have a high respect for Frank's perseverance—but will you tell me what earthly difference can it make to you or me, or any human being, how many vertebrae a frog has—how many legs a caterpillar—or how far a flea can go at one hop? I have no patience with him for wasting his time in such exquisite nonsense."

'The proper study of mankind is man.'

"I say 'woman,' but that's a variation from the author. Still, really, all these disquisitions about tadpoles, and what I used to call at school tittlebacks, seem to me to be hardly worth the time which the discussions occupy."

"I don't profess to know any thing about such things," said Jane; "but I think that such researches may tend to great results."

"I dare say they may," said Sir George, "like our disquisition the other day at Greenwich about the whitebait. I confess it does not much matter to me to have a geological description of the soil of St. James's-street—all I know is, it's stone on the top, and what's under I don't think you or I much care about. Now if Frank had his will, up would go the pavement—down he'd go, and be delighted to tell you something of its organization, which, if you are like me, you wouldn't understand; and then they would put the stones down again; and then we should have the pavement again, just as wise as we were before it had been pulled up."

"Ah!" said Jane, "but if every body acted upon your principle, Sir George, we should lose a vast deal of information."

"So you would," said Sir George, "and what then? I don't preach—I have no right to preach, for I am not good enough; but don't you see how regularly, in proportion as this 'knowledge' increases, 'infidelity' prospers. Don't think I am getting saintish. How did it happen that in the most glorious times of this country, none of this wonderful enlightenment existed? Bacon

wasn't a blockhead; Coke wasn't a fool; Queen Elizabeth was something; Shakspere wasn't quite an idiot; Newton wasn't a dunce; Milton, though he was blind, was not quite contemptible: and come nearer; your Addisons, Swifts, Popes, Drydens, and half a hundred more, were rather above par. *They* never troubled their heads about the backbones of lizards, or the antlers of snails; and as for geology, there wasn't one of them who knew what Silex meant, or ever talked about Quartz, except with regard to his drinking."

"That'll do—that'll do," said Bruff; "you've no taste for those sorts of things, and you are right. Come, Jenny, go—go—I've rung the bell—you'll find lights up-stairs."

And so, with one of those very uncongenial snubs which the colonel was in the habit of giving, away went Jane, expelled only because she glanced at Frank Grindle, and seemed disposed to defend his meritorious scientific pursuits. Sir George leaped from his chair to open the door to permit her egress, and truth to say, began to feel more and more sorry that he had so hastily driven his amiable son to the necessity of breaking up his establishment in the neighbourhood of the Regent's-Park.

And now it was immediately subsequent to this, that Mrs. Smylar first made her re-appearance after the *old* fashion, in the drawing-room, and began to resume her ordinary mode of addressing Jane. But her manner was evidently meant to be repossessing and winning; and moreover, there was in her conduct an air of caution and watchfulness of being overheard, which was not usual with her when she had previously chosen to be familiar and communicative.

"So Miss Jane," said she, "Mr. Grindle has gone out of town—to France isn't he?"

"I believe he is," said Jane, who was not quite aware of his destination, and somehow would have been better pleased if Mrs. Smylar could have informed her to what part of the world his brother had betaken himself.

"A fine-looking person?" said Smylar, somewhat interrogatively.

"Yes," said Jane, turning over the leaves of a book which lay before her.

"Surely you think him handsome?" said Mrs. Smylar.

"To tell you the truth, Smylar," said Jane, "I have not thought about it."

"No?" said Smylar. "And yet he has been here very often—constantly, as one may say."

"That's quite true," said Jane.

"Well, now," said Mrs. Smylar, "will you be very angry, miss Jane, if I tell you what I think?"

"Not I," said Jane, perfectly satisfied that Mrs. Smylar was prepared with an eulogium of the most extravagant character of

his person, mind, qualities, qualifications, all delivered, cut and dry by her father to his fair minister, in order to her edification and improvement.

"Of course the colonel is to know nothing of this," said Smylar.

Jane was somewhat startled by this appeal, inasmuch as the idea of Smylar's making a confidence with *her*, was rather a novelty in the arrangements of the establishment; but "of course," as Mrs. Smylar said, Jane agreed to her conditions.

"Well, then," said Smylar, "I think him odious; and if I were you, Jane"—she called her Jane—"I would never consent to marry him. He is what I call a nasty-looking fellow. I have taken care to look at him over the staircase—I hate that sort of man—and *I* wouldn't marry him."

"But," said Jane, "my father wishes me to marry him, and tells me I must love him."

"Must," said Smylar, "as the proverb goes, 'is for the king'; but there is no must in matters like these. I have had some knowledge of the world,—and when I was what I thought well to do, have had some experience as to the sort of men to be trusted and loved. This Mr. George Grindle is neither to be loved nor trusted—have nothing to say to him. If you were my own daughter, I could not feel a greater regard for you—send him away—refuse him."

"But, Smylar," said Jane, "it is quite true that our opinions happen to coincide; still how am I to evade my father's orders—his positive commands?"

"How!" said Smylar, "I cannot tell you *how*; but there *are* ways enough if you choose. He loves you too well to be seriously angry with you long; you may manage him just as you please,—fair words and your own free will—that I am sure of—as sure as I am that Mr. Grindle is not the husband for *you*."

"Well," said Jane, "knowing, Mrs. Smylar, how readily you generally agree with papa, I must own I am not a little surprised at your expressing such opinions of his most particular favourite."

"You don't know me yet," said Mrs. Smylar, her eyes filling with tears, kept always in a state of distillation ready for use by such people. "I know that you have a bad opinion of me, and think I influence the colonel. I may perhaps have some little power over him, engendered by what I trust even *you* will believe to be a scrupulous attention to his interests, and the prudent regulation of his establishment. But Jane,—and I presume to call you Jane, because I feel a deep interest in all that concerns you,—I cannot bear to see you sacrificed to a popinjay like that—a pretender—a second-class dandy, who would not, when I was in the profession, have been permitted to play even a walking gentleman in genteel comedy."

"But," said Jane, "have you ever hinted to papa your disapprobation of this favourite of his?"

"Me!" said Smylar, "what opportunity have I of talking to the colonel, except upon mere matters of household business?—especially when my dear young lady is in town; for then even those occasions and opportunities are more rare. What *he* thinks upon this business, I honestly own I do not regard. That thing—man I cannot even bring myself to call him—is odious, and must be odious to any living woman."

"The day they both were here," said Jane, meaning what she said to mean nothing, "did you see his brother?"

"Yes," said Smylar, "I did—a very different-looking person; but of course I know nothing more—he is gone into the country, isn't he, Miss Jane?"

"I really don't know," said Jane.

"If you like to know," said Smylar, "there can be no great difficulty about it;—but isn't it odd that if you are interested about him—"

"Me!" said Jane exceedingly confused, and feeling herself blush—"I am not interested about him—what could have put that into your head?"

"Nothing, my dear Miss Jane," said Smylar, looking at her own bright cunning eyes in the looking-glass over the chimney-piece, "except that it struck me by your manner of inquiring after him, that you might have been pleased with him the day he dined here, and the day you invited him to Greenwich."

Here—as is always the case with the *very* cunning ones—Mrs. Smylar let out, as they say, a little more than was quite prudent, or would have been quite prudent had her "recipient" been quicker in her apprehension of the ways of the world; because it was evident that if the gallant colonel, who never talked to her of any thing but household matters, had not enlarged upon Jane's admission to him touching her "gentle remind" to the white "*bélice*" at Greenwich, which she had given to Frank, Smylar never could, by any possibility, have known any thing about it. This particular "coincidence" did not, however, strike poor dear Jane; and the actress who, in a moment after she had made it, recollected her blunder, said, or did something to cover her own indiscretion, and change the subject of their conversation.

"I certainly think of the two," said Jane, "Francis Grindle is infinitely preferable; but what I have said to papa is, why force me to marry any body?—I am extremely happy as I am. If by any chance I should see a man whose qualities and accomplishments might, in my estimation, be calculated to increase that happiness, well and good; but why I am to be sent for up to London, from delightful society, amusement, and every thing agreeable, to be driven into a marriage, and *that* with a

whom, as *you* say, no rational woman could endure, I do not understand."

"Well," said Smylar, "as I have before said, I do not venture to give you advice; but, without saying too much, this I will say, that if I were you, before I would marry that man, I would suffer anything—every thing that a father could inflict upon me."

"I have written to Mrs. Amersham," said the confiding Jane, "to ask her her opinion as to the course I should pursue. Perhaps I shall hear to-morrow, and at all events he—Mr. George Grindle—is not to be back for a week at least."

"I wonder now," said Smylar, looking as innocent as one of the country-girls in farces, whose parts when she was "in the profession" she had been in the habit of enacting,—"I wonder now what has taken *him* to France just at this particular moment."

"Some unavoidable business, papa says," answered Jane.

"A nice piece of business, no doubt," said Smylar. "I have no patience with the fellow. Oh! Miss Jane, I *could* tell you a story which you ought to know, but which I must not enlighten you with. It is altogether an ugly affair; and in whatever way you make up your mind to resist the plan, I'll help you—yes, to the uttermost; so, now depend upon *me*—wait till you hear from Mrs. Amersham—I think I can guess what she'll say—and *then* command *me*."

Saying which, Smylar withdrew, leaving Jane excessively astonished at the total change which a few days—nay, hours—had worked in that person's character and conduct towards her. The idea of her lending herself to a conspiracy against the colonel, with the view of thwarting his most favourite intentions, and defeating his best-cherished scheme, seemed of itself unintelligible; but the sudden and violent hatred which the "woman of the world" had taken against George Grindle, was even more extraordinary still; and when she retired, our poor dear girl felt more puzzled than before; she did not see her way through the darkness by which she was enveloped, and wistfully looked forward to Emma's letter, as to something which might serve to guide her through the misty haze in which she was bewildered.

The allusion made by Smylar to Mr. Francis Grindle's present "local habitation" coming so immediately after the baronet's plain and evidently undisguised denial of any knowledge of his then position, was something which—perhaps unconsciously—more excited Jane, as far as her own feelings went, than any thing else she had said—barring always the marvellous change in the tone of her conversation as regarded the colonel. It struck her that Smylar *did* know what Sir George *did not*; and, although, even if she possessed the information, she could make no use of it, she might, if she chose to condescend to any thing like a confidence with a person she despised, ascertain the pre-

sent residence of Francis Grindle. But why should she think about him? She cared for him only as it were comparatively, and because strangely, yet with some strengthening circumstances of probability, she considered that her father had determined she should marry a Grindle. This feeling narrowed her views as it hurried her determination, and although more than ever puzzled by the new tone of Mrs. Smylar's conversation, she could not divest herself of the idea that compliance with her father's commands was her only chance of escape from the future domination of Smylar in the character of mother-in-law.

Then, again, inexperienced as she was in the world's ways, as we have just said, Jane could not account for Smylar's personal dislike of George Grindle, because, in point of fact, there was nothing personally disagreeable about him. He had ringlets, and curls, and was something like a sheep in the face, and was exceedingly fine, and very coxcombical; but still he was good-looking. With a good figure of its school, and just as one would have thought such a person as Mrs. Smylar would have pronounced "uncommon," the fault he had, was in his manner—the tone of his conversation—and the affected superiority to the part he could in reality play in the world. But of *this*, Smylar, who in all probability had never heard him speak—unless upon her favourite system of listening—could not judge; and, therefore, Jane began to think that for some reason—inasmuch as she had brought herself to believe that Smylar never either said or did any thing without a motive—Francis Grindle *had* secured her interests, and that it was in *his* favour she was deprecating the pretensions of George. It is impossible to comprehend the vast range of thoughts, and fancies, and hopes, and expectations, of a creature like the tender, gentle Jane, when once the mind is agitated as hers was at the time in question.

But then again came reason to her aid. How, when, where, and even why, should Frank have taken any measures of this sort?—he had never—that she knew of—even seen Smylar—he had seen *her* but thrice, and upon those occasions he had betrayed in all his words and actions a submissive acquiescence in what as we know he considered a fixed family arrangement. The brief balcony-scene at Greenwich was a matter of accident; if he felt grateful to Jane for the "remind," he scarcely had time to express his feelings; he came no more; he quitted town;—and yet after all her reasoning, the glimmering star of hope was still in her eye, and in spite of all the improbabilities, not to call them impossibilities, of the case, she could not quite divest herself of the notion that somehow or other—how she could not comprehend—the amiable and accomplished Francis was the latent cause of Smylar's *tirade* against his brother.

Jane's reflections and considerations upon this point were destined to be broken in upon by the arrival to coffee of Sir George and the colonel; Sir George being more gallant than

usual, and succeeding in making his future daughter-in-law believe him a most delightful person.

We must leave the worthy baronet seated by her side on a sofa, sipping curaçoa, and entertaining her with all the little news which the season of the year afforded, and really and truly amusing and pleasing her with his anecdotal conversation, to turn to the proceedings of his hopeful son, who had some three or four days before taken his departure from the happy isle.

Having taken every *unnecessary* precaution to elude his father's vigilance, George Grindle by break of day broke up from the cottage, and much to his own annoyance started for France with his affectionate Nelly and the child. But the effort to maintain a conversation with his once loved and now repudiated companion, required more hypocrisy and deceit than even *he* was master of. It was impossible for him to go through a whole day's journey to Dover listening to that poor girl's projects for his return to France at as early a period as possible, and hoping for their eventual reconciliation with Sir George, and still keep up the delusion. Therefore, when they changed horses at Dartford, he proposed, for the greater convenience of Tiney and his mother, that her maid should exchange places with him, and get into the carriage, while he mounted the rumble—a change, certainly not welcome to Ellen, nor at all in consonance with his former devotedness and love of her society. However, he wished it, and his wish was law.

When they reached Canterbury it was getting duskish, and Ellen urged him to resume his place, but he still refused, on the ground of a headach, and his preference for air. Now, it had been his original intention to stop at Canterbury and sleep, on account of the child, who might not so well bear the fatigue of a long journey—at least such was Ellen's arrangement;—nevertheless they pushed on at once to Dover, which they reached about seven in the evening.

Here, having ordered dinner, and Tiney having been sent to his rest, George gave all necessary directions for shipping the carriage in the morning packet,—and having swallowed a hasty and tasteless meal, persuaded Ellen to get to bed soon, in order to be ready for the early start; with which bidding, or request, she complied, with all her wonted readiness, leaving George to take a stroll along the parade to cool his heated brain,—for heated it was with excitement and the journey,—and calculate without the fear of interruption, the best means of doing what he called, “letting Nelly down easy when he got her to her journey's end.”

On his return to the hotel he wrote a letter to his worthy father, informing him of his progress so far on his barbarous expedition; and another—the first he had ever ventured upon, or, indeed, had occasion to address to her—to Jane—which was

destined to reach her hand simultaneously with the one she had so anxiously anticipated from Emma;—so

“The bane and antidote were both before her.”

But of this event, or the effects producible or produced by the coincidence, we can yet know nothing, since it is now our province to follow, or rather accompany, the departing trio on their way to Versailles.

The hurry and bustle of a daybreak departure superseded all other feelings and sentiments in the morning; and having got Nelly and her darling child on board the steamer, George, anxiously solicitous for their comfort, advised her to go below with Tiney, and take possession of some snug berth, where they would be less affected by a roughish sea, and where—which was another object—they would be out of the way of observation by their fellow-passengers.

There were not many on board, for some of the ladies who had intended crossing were deterred by the freshness of the breeze, which to their delicate senses was magnified into a gale. George ran his eye over the few who remained on deck, and having satisfied himself that they were nobodies, got into his carriage and endeavoured to compose himself to sleep. Had he chanced to have a book in his possession, the consummation he sought would soon have been effected; for somehow or other, reading, whenever he tried it, produced the happy symptoms of somnolency he now so anxiously courted.

In his bootless attempt, bookless as he was, he failed, and the sun bursting out from the clouds, and the breeze moderating in proportion as they neared the French coast, he descended from his travelling-chariot—or rather that of Sir George—which, being undistinguished by any armorial distinctions (for reasons best known to both father and son), would not have betrayed, even to the best herald on St. Benet's-hill, the name or rank of the owner. The particular look of this carriage had attracted the notice of one passenger, who, enveloped in his cloak, continued walking the deck during the whole of the passage, rather liking “the rocking of the *elements*” as suiting the present temper of his mind, and when the particularly fine owner of it re-emerged from its door, the tall stranger in the cloak having made some brief apology to George for taking such a liberty (which brief apology was, under the circumstances, exceedingly well received), asked him who built it.

George, rather flattered at finding *the man* upon whom his mind had conferred the distinction of *the gentleman* of the party, particularly stricken by the appearance of the carriage, forthwith gave him the required information, and thence arose an hour's personal acquaintance. They walked together and talked,

and before a quarter of the period of their intimacy of sixty minutes had expired, each of them was driven into a puzzle to know whom the other was, and how it were possible that two men moving evidently in the same sphere should not have been in some degree known to each other before.

It is very good fun to watch two men under similar circumstances trying to find out by the most roundabout means, and the most insignificant—the chancellor might call them “impertinent”—questions, something more of each other. The tall man in the cloak was not a member of Crockford's, but he belonged to the Travellers’—George belonged to Crockford's, but was *not* a member of the Travellers’. The tall man in the cloak was going to France to stay—George was only going for part of a week. The servant of the tall man in the cloak came to him to know whether he hadn't better get the luggage ready for landing—George had no servant with him—why? The tall man in the cloak was going honourably on *his* visit to France—George was sneaking away for the perpetration of a baseness, at which the tall man in the cloak would have shuddered.

“I must go below,” said George Grindle, “and look after my little woman.”

The tall man in the cloak having won so much of his confidence, and even so much of his admiration, by his manners and conversation, George felt—and oh! how strangely contradictory are all human feelings—an anxiety that he should see the lovely creature whom *he* was on the eve of deserting.

He went—the water being now smooth under the lee of the land, he thought she would like to come upon deck, and the darling little bright-eyed child was impatient for a run.

The tall man in the cloak took that opportunity of asking one of the men belonging to the steamer, if he knew whose carriage that was—pointing to the plain olive-green chariot in question.

“Yes, sir,” said the man, touching his hat with his hand turned horizontally; “Mr. Grindle's, sir—son of Sir George Grindle—he very often comes and goes by us.”

The tall man in the cloak said nothing but the words “Thank you,” and resumed his walk.

What the thoughts were, that were passing in the mind of the tall man in the cloak when he heard this name—the name of a man he had never seen before, never known, and, as it should seem, could not in the slightest degree be interested about, who shall pretend to guess?

George Grindle returned with the lovely Ellen leaning on his arm, looking more lovely than ever. The rest she had taken had refreshed her, and George's kindness in coming below to seek her society, reminded her of other days; and when she made her appearance, resting for support upon the heartless fiend who was resolved in eight-and-forty hours more to abandon her,

with her beautiful boy holding her other hand, the stranger was evidently much stricken.

George did not know how, or by what name, to present him to Ellen; but there is a sort of conventional feeling of confidence amongst gentlemen, and, although ignorant of the *name*, George was perfectly satisfied of the condition and quality of his anonymous friend, and a single simple bow of recognition on his part, followed by a question of no great intrinsic importance, but valuable in forming a link in what seemed to be designed to be a general conversation amongst themselves, thawed the ice, and brought the trio into easy communication: a conclusion to which they were more speedily and less formally brought by an expression on the part of Tiney, of the most violent love-at-first-sight of a cane of which the tall man in the cloak happened to be the possessor. His kindness to the child, who immediately pounced upon the object of his delight, in spite of the awful frown of his mother, and his instant conversion of it into a horse for his own exercise, won the esteem and regard of Ellen, while George felt a strange sort of vanity in seeing how very much the tall man in the cloak admired Tiney's mamma.

The duration or extent of his acquaintance with George, whose name even he did not know from the proper authority, did not seem to justify the tall man in the cloak in asking any questions concerning the object of their voyage; only certain it was, that the gentleman whom *he* knew to be Mr. George Grindle, had told him that *his* visit to France would be exceedingly short. Now it seemed from something which passed in the course of their conversation, that *her* stay was likely to be permanent; and this certainly did awaken a certain degree of desire on the part of the tall man in the cloak to know something more of their history. Moreover there was a plaintiveness in all Ellen said, and in her looks a sort of restless anxiety, which seemed only to be relieved when she caught a look of kindness from George; and therefore, it might perhaps have been wrong in its degree, but it was perfectly natural, that when George—who having no man-servant with him, was forced to take more upon himself than if he had had one—was gone to look after something, and see about something else, the tall man in the cloak did venture to ask Ellen if she was going to remain in France.

"For the present," said Ellen, "I am going to stay at Versailles with my mother."

This perfectly satisfied the stranger, and dissipated into thin air some doubts which had grown up in his mind as to the *order* of the proposed separation between George and the lady. When George returned, the tall man in the cloak resumed his decent civility, and played with Tiney and the stick, even more assiduously than before.

The voyage ended, the squabbles of *commissionnaires*, the rush

of baggage-bearers, the cries of contending "wreckers," as they may be called, the opportunity of the *douaniers*, and all the rest of it, suddenly cut the knot of the incipient acquaintance of George and the tall man in the cloak. They were soon separated in the crowd, and George anxious to get on, for the sake of a speedy return, made every exertion to get the superfluous formalities over, and, in less than three hours from their arrival at Calais, the wretched trio for such they seem destined to be, were on their way to Boulogne.

Ellen had been accustomed to France, and had been educated there in an English school on Montmartre, whence she had been taken, when she was supposed to have learned enough of the nothingness of which boarding-school education is made up, by her mother, and with *her* domesticated at Versailles; and even yet she looked back to the neat little parterres in the school-garden, the baize-covered breakfast-tables, and the protecting dog at the entrance, with recollections as strong as if *la belle France* had been her own country. To her, the broad expanse of unenclosed, yet highly-cultivated country, the straggling and scantily-populated hamlets, which so forcibly strike the English eye upon leaving our thickly-peopled, fertile Kentish valleys, were almost picturesque; and, as associated with later affections, and even more endearing ties, she welcomed them with pleasure. It was through this country she had passed with George,—her beloved George,—after having taken that step which had excluded her from all society except that of her betrayer. Those were days to *her* of pure bright happiness, and a recurrence to them was not the less blissful because some dark clouds, unlooked for, and unanticipated by her, had since risen upon her fate.

To George, whose notions of the picturesque were of a very peculiar order, the whole affair was monotony the most melancholy; his opinion of scenery was very much of the same school as that of the man who declared that if he were obliged to live in the country, he would have the approach to his house paved, and hire a hackney-coach by the year to drive up and down all day before his windows.

George duly appreciated the charms of "the shady side of Pall-mall," "the groves of tall chimneys," and all the other attributes of London, so well sung by the veteran bard Captain Morris; and it was there, and amongst their attributes, his thoughts were resting while making his present wearisome progress. But what were such thoughts as his worth, when the secondary object of them was such a being as Jane Bruff, and when they scarcely could wander to her fortune—the sole object of attraction to him—without resting remorselessly and wretchedly upon the lovely companion of his journey?

Ellen could not fail to notice and feel deeply the absence and abstraction by which George's conduct was characterized; but

she, poor confiding girl, attributed them to the cause in which originated her own anxiety and sorrow—the approaching separation of two fond hearts, increased as she thought, on his part, by his deep losses at play, and the pain he felt at his estrangement from his father, partly, if not chiefly, as he had made her believe, consequent upon his connexion with her. It was true she was returning to an affectionate parent, whose fate, at least as far as we are concerned at present, is equally involved in mystery with that of her child. But although the proverb makes the mother say,

“My son is my son till he gets him a wife,
My daughter’s my daughter the whole of her life,”

still Ellen could not overcome the gnawing recollection that she was for a time to be separated from George—herself being the cause of the separation. Poor Nelly!

The travellers slept at Montreuil on account of Tiney, and proceeded on their journey next morning. When they reached Abbeville, Tincy was hungry and to be refreshed, and Nelly herself felt as if even she could eat something. George readily acceded to the suggestion of calling a halt, accordingly, a remarkably nice clean meal, although much too early for dinner, according to George’s opinion, was served to them in the *salle-à-manger*, under the gateway of the *Tête de Bauf*.

While this repast was preparing, George what he called “stretched his legs,” by walking out of the inn-yard, disdaining some very pressing remarks of sundry congregated beggars, who suggested the propriety of his visiting the beautiful cathedral, and the river Somme, all of which they did with a pride and enthusiasm wholly unknown to the lower orders of English, who rather wonder at the pursuits of investigating travel, than aid them in accomplishing their objects. To all these incitements to the picturesque George turned a deaf ear, and maintained in all its force the purity of the English character, according to the French acceptation, by bestowing upon them a few of those monosyllabic anathemas, for which our countrymen are said to be so celebrated throughout the civilized world.

Turning back again, to avoid the importunities of these craving *cognoscenti*, George’s eyes encountered, emerging from the door of a room opposite to that in which his dinner was being prepared, the tall man in the cloak who had been his fellow-passenger in the steamer. “I seem,” said the stranger, accosting George, “to have got the start of you.”

“Why,” said George, “you travel lightly and alone: I have more companions and luggage. We slept last night at Montreuil. However, I propose to push on to Grandvilliers to-night if I can.—Are you now for Paris?”

“No,” said the stranger, “I have some idea of making this a

point to start from, in making a little tour which I have for some time had in contemplation. I have no doubt I shall end in Paris."

"So probably shall I," said George, "eventually; but for the present I only make a flying visit. Indeed, I shall merely pass through it to deposit my young lady with her mother at Versailles, whither I have promised her for some time to go; and then scamper back to London as fast as I can."

"So then," thought the stranger, "the account the lady gave of herself is the true one. Why I should have doubted her I know not—that she is good and amiable I am sure." In fact, the stranger felt a deep interest in Ellen even at first sight; he was pleased with the manful playfulness of her child, and that interest increased when he saw her again at Abbeville, recovered from the temporary disarrangement caused by the little voyage, and looking as bright and beautiful as any one could look whose heart was full of grief, and whose eyes gave evidence that tears had been there.

George Grindle saw that the stranger *was* interested about them, and being satisfied by his manner, the mode in which he travelled, and the way in which he was served, that he was safely to be cultivated, was by no means disinclined to enlist him as a participator in the meal which was just ready; and indeed gave such indications of his wishes on that point, as to induce the stranger in the cloak to tell him that he had already taken a substantial luncheon; which joined to the fact that George was hastening forward as speedily as possible, would render that arrangement useless. But when the stranger made his bow, he certainly *did* look at Ellen in a very peculiar manner. The look he gave was neither presumptuous nor licentious; it was not a look of worldly love; nor was it a look of an expectation of meeting with her again, founded, as with some men it might have been, on her simple statement of her destination to Versailles, corroborated by the subsequent announcement of George. But, divested as it was of all or any of these attributes, the look struck into the gentle Ellen's heart; in it, there seemed to her to be something awfully prophetic. She tried to rally from the feeling with which it had impressed her. What could this man be to *her* or she to *him*? Yet the intensity of feeling which he exhibited on leaving them—so much deeper and even more solemn in its character than it was when they had separated in the morning at Calais—astonished her not more, than the difficulty she had in endeavouring to drive it from her mind and memory.

To Tiney the stranger presented the much-loved stick on which in the packet he had taken his mimic equestrian exercise. George begged that he would not indulge the child so very much, but the stranger insisted; and *la fille* at the *Tête de Boeuf* having announced to *Madame* that she was served, the newly-made friends prepared for their separation.

"Perhaps," said the stranger, "we may hereafter meet in Paris. I shall be happy if you will permit me to renew our acquaintance at some future opportunity;" and these words were strongly emphasized with another look at Ellen, perceived by George, but without any of the nervous anxiety, or jealous displeasure, which a few months before would have agitated and angered him. On the contrary, he rejoined upon the stranger by saying, that after his kindness to Tiney, he was quite sure his mamma would be most happy, if he happened to go to Versailles, to present him to her mother, Mrs. Eversfield, who had long been residing there, and who would be exceedingly glad to evince her gratitude for his great consideration of her little spoiled grandson.

Ellen, to say truth, was rather surprised at the mode in which George gave an invitation to *her* mother's house to a perfect stranger; but even the most trifling mark of kindness to a darling child excites a fond mother's gratitude, and the good-nature with which he had humoured Tiney's fancy for his stick, had secured him her good opinion, not deteriorated by the consciousness of the interest which, as we have just seen, she felt strongly convinced he took in her fate, but which she was equally certain involved no sentiment which she might not properly cherish.

"Good day, then," said the stranger, "you will be rattling over these terrific roads while I shall be quietly studying the beauties of this part of France, in which I have never stayed. When I am in Paris, the Hôtel de Bourbon is my *pied à terre*, and having taken so great a liberty with you, as to intrude myself, I leave you my card, in order that if you are passing my door, and feel so inclined, we may meet again."

Now to George, giving *his* card in return was the thing of all others he would have wished to avoid; but as the acquaintance, by the intervention of Tiney, had so far progressed, it did not seem possible for him to avoid the expression of mutual confidence and anxiety that they might know more of each other. He had hoped to get entirely clear of any further *dénouement*, in the first instance, by their separation at Calais; and in the second, when they met at Abbeville, by giving the stranger the name and address of Ellen's mother, at Versailles, and not being aware that the stranger knew perfectly well who he was, would, if he could, have shuffled. It was, however, in vain, and George, thus driven to the act, wrote on a piece of paper, having no visiting ticket with him, "Mr. Grindlc—Crockford's," adding, as he presented it to the stranger, that wherever he might be, *that* address would surely find him; little supposing at the moment that as

"The great globe itself shall dissolve,"

that magnificent, convenient, convivial, agreeable, and admirable establishment was destined to dissipation wholly of another

character from that for which the uninitiated choose to censure it. The "mighty master," full of wealth, and growing full of years, having achieved his labours, has resolved, like Hercules, to give up his club. At the period of which we treat, that event had not even been surmised or anticipated, and the stranger received the card as describing in a perfectly satisfactory manner the "whercabout" of Mr. George Grindle.

The new friends shook hands, the stranger shook hands with poor Ellen, and kissing the forehead of her darling boy, quitted them, leaving in the possession of Mr. George Grindle, his card, thus engraven and written:

"MR. MILES BLACKMORE,
"Hotel de Bourbon."

CHAPTER XI.

IN the course of everyday life, persons moving in a certain circle, even if not personally acquainted with particular men or women, or even not knowing them by sight, are so constantly in the habit of hearing their names, that the moment George Grindle cast his eyes upon Miles Blackmore's card, he felt perfectly sure that he had heard something about him somewhere. It was natural that he *should* have heard something about him, and it was true that he had; for in the course of the constant visitations which he had during the last fortnight or three weeks inflicted upon Jane Brusf, it was scarcely possible that Miles Blackmore should not have been mentioned. Still at the moment he could not recal to his memory when or *what* he had heard of him; and the only feeling to which the possession of his card gave rise, was one of self-satisfaction at having judged correctly the character and condition of the man in the cloak in the steam-packet: for one of the predominant anxieties of a fool is to be considered exceedingly shrewd and penetrating.

Ellen's feelings, when Miles Blackmore left them, were to herself inexplicable. As we have already observed, his parting look excited, and even troubled her in no ordinary degree. Had it been characterized by an expression such as that which beamed in the countenance of George's most particular friend, Jack Ashford, the momentary disgust it would have caused, would have been followed by a forgetfulness of the offender. But the earnest devotedness of Miles Blackmore's manner, the almost solemn way in which he took leave of her, were startling and affecting—they were fraternal—they expressed a deep interest in her fate—a fate of the peculiarity of which she herself was not then conscious, and it was in vain she tried, during the dinner

friends prepared for their separation.

with George and Tiney, to drive from her thoughts the recollection of it.

"Uncommon nice fellow!" said George; "don't you think so, Nelly?"

"Who?" asked she.

"Who?" replied George. "Why our new, intimate, and very slight acquaintance, Mr. Miles Blackmore."

"He seems exceedingly agreeable," said Ellen, helping Tiney to some of the fruit from a *charlotte*, to avoid the scrutinizing glance of George, who had learned to read her thoughts in the beautiful index of her mind, and which, for the first time in her life, she felt half afraid to meet.

"And seems," said George, "I think, to have formed an exceedingly favourable opinion of you. I dare say you will see more of him at Versailles; there was a good deal of what I call come-againishness in his manner."

"Why," said Ellen, "as he is, as the card he gave you says, domiciled in Paris, when he settles himself any where in France, I do not exactly know why we should see more of him at Versailles."

Ellen was much too ingenuous, too innocent, and too simple-minded to take heed of the constant endeavours of her beloved George to entangle her upon every available occasion—not yet practically, but as far as diverting her thoughts into such channels went—into some new *liaison*. She saw in it nothing but the delightful confidence of mutual love, and a desire to increase as much as possible the limited circle of their acquaintance; but, strange to say, upon the present occasion, she felt vexed at his allusion to his supposition of Blackmore's preference, and was even conscious of blushing; the very thing she most particularly wished to avoid at the moment, inasmuch as she was aware that the blue eyes of her beloved George were fixed upon her, and she feared that the agitation of which she was conscious might be attributed by him to the effect of feelings of a nature and character totally different from those by which she really was affected.

Luckily, Tiney dropped his spoon, and as they had dispensed with any attendance during that which (saving Tiney's presence) was their *tête-à-tête* meal, and Ellen's stooping to pick it up for her "awkward little boy," answered two purposes—it concealed the flush of her cheek as she stooped, and accounted for it when she raised her head after the exertion.

"As to that," said George, "a man lives at Paris—but Versailles is Paris—Richmond is London. That has nothing to do with it. I'll bet you as many pairs of gloves as shall last you for a twelvemonth, that I shall hear from you, that Mr. Miles Blackmore has paid his devoirs at Mrs. Eversfield's, before we are six weeks older."

"You know more of the world," said Ellen, "and of this gen-

tleman than I do; you were for an hour or two talking to him in the steam-boat; but as far as I am concerned, I do not see why you should anticipate any such invasion of mamma's quiet retreat."

"You do *not* see, Nelly," said George, finishing a glass of Chablis. "We *shall* see—eh—Tiney, my boy? Don't you love that nice gentleman that gave you that pretty stick?"

"Yes," said Tiney, "that I do—and I love him too because he loves mamma."

"There," said George—"there, Nelly, what do you think of *that*?—that's what I call the march of intellect—you'll do, my lad. So he loves mamma, does he? What makes you think that, Tiney?"

"Because," said the child, "he looked so good-natured when he went away—just as you do, 'pa.'"

"Now, my Nelly, what do you think?" said George, laughingly.

"Think," said Ellen, "that Tiney and you are about equally wise. How can you talk such nonsense—or teach your child to talk such nonsense!"

"'Tis his mother tongue, Nelly," said Grindle; "only it's what I call a 'coincidence'—ha! ha! ha!—don't look cross, Nelly. What! crying—about what?"

That was a question Nelly could not have fairly answered to George. Perhaps to nobody on earth could she have explained—inasmuch as she could not explain it to herself—the interest which the stranger had excited in her mind. We have already seen that its character was farthest in the world from that which George Grindle would have assigned to it, but still it *was* an interest; and the pang which brought tears into Ellen's eyes was one of grief, that, for the first time since she had known George, she could by any possibility be influenced by any feeling, the nature or origin of which she could not at once avow.

"You should not, dearest George," sobbed the poor girl, "you should not speak to me so—"

"Speak, dearest!" said Grindle, "I only charge you with having made a conquest. Your son and I agree upon that point—the chip and the old block are *d'accord*."

"Poor babe!" said Ellen, drawing the child to her and kissing him with all the tenderness of a devoted mother, "you ought not to do this, George. I do not deserve it."

"Deserve what, Nell?" said George. "You can't help it—if ladies will have fine eyes, fine features, fine figures, and charming manners, how the deuce are they to blame? I said nothing about *you*. I was talking of my intimate and slight acquaintance, Mr. Blackmore. It's quite clear that you have hit him hard—knocked him over—so don't affect to deny it—as I say, no fault of yours—it only shows *your* power and *his* taste. I look

upon it as uncommonly complimentary to your merit and his judgment."

"Dear George," said Ellen, "do not drink ahy more of that wine. It is time we should be going, if we are to sleep at Beauvilliers to-night. I never saw you in so strange a humour before."

"Not strange, dear," said George. "I have *my* opinions. I think nothing can be a greater practical compliment to any man than to see chained the lady who has enchaincd others. I am not singular—it's the regular line to take, go where you will. The more danglers a wife has, the better pleased seems the husband, and—"

"Go where I will!" said Ellen. "I go nowhere; and really, if that is the fashion, I have no desire to belong to the society in which you see it."

"Oh no," said George, "you—and all that, *that's* another thing of course; but I only say—that if you don't cry, I'll say nothing more than order out the horses. All I mean to say is, that it is quite clear to me that Mr. Miles Blackmore is a man of good taste."

Ellen shook her head, her eyes were cast down, and her heart ached. The preparations incidental to their progress checked any further conversation on the subject, which seemed uppermost in Mr. George Grindle's mind, and the only reference to the matter which took place was, when they were settling themselves in the carriage, and Tiney, whose whole heart and soul were centred in Mr. Miles Blackmore's stick, was begging to have it put at the door that he might keep his eye upon it, instead of having it entombed in the sword-case. George handed it to Ellen, saying to the child,

"It's quite safe, Tiney—depend upon it your mamma will take care of *that* for you."

"If the proverb, "*Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte*," is to be depended upon, the outset of the journey towards Beauvilliers may be even yet an agreeable one; certainly the start (barring the adage) does not promise much. It is not meant to be inferred that George Grindle will do that which is called "picking a quarrel" with Ellen; but every body knows, and every body has felt, that when a particular subject, or in this case we may say object, has taken possession of a man, nothing relating to or connected with it, however small in the way of fact or incident, is left unharboured or uncherished in his mind.

That George Grindle never meant to see Ellen after he should have taken leave of her at Versailles, we pretty well know. His object was to effect their separation quietly, and let the storm burst upon her devoted head only when she should read in the English newspapers the report of his marriage with Miss Jane

Bruff: but still, by habituating her to these accusations of making conquests, and exhibiting also his perfect complacency on the subject, he worked with all the cunning of his grovelling mind, to lead her insensibly into the belief, that, however much he loved her, her infidelity would *not* incur his anger. This he had previously tried, as we know, in the case of Jack Ashford, his intimate friend; and now again in the case of Miles Blackmore, a man of whom he knew nothing the day before.

In the former of these cases she wondered much, in the latter, she marvelled more. In the former, the repugnance she felt of itself repelled any thought but that of disgust and contempt, not less for his person, manners, and conversation, than for his baseness and treachery towards her beloved George. In the latter, something different was to be said—the irony of her companion was deeply felt—she could not tell why; and it was with no dissatisfaction that she saw, soon after Tiney had fallen asleep in her lap, his amiable father in as deep a slumber as he was when he was pushing his fortunes with Miss Bruff, in the *trajet* from Greenwich, on the evening of their memorable expedition to that place.

Well, let *them* go their way, and while on their journey, let us see if we can find out what Mr. Francis Grindle is or has been doing since his disappearance from London. Our solicitude is scarcely less than that of dear Jane Bruff. Whether our inquiries may be more successful than those which she made of his worthy and agreeable father, we know not, but we have reason to believe, that wherever he may be, the interest created in his mind—perhaps his heart—by Jane, brief as their acquaintance has been, has not decreased since he so honourably tore himself away from her.

It is a curious, and by no means a worthless pursuit, to search, as far as one is able, into minds, for motives, the results of which are, looking superficially, in many cases exactly similar, but which in point of origin are wholly different. For instance, two very foolish people meet for the first time, and fall in love at first sight. That all strangers must, to become acquainted, meet is self-evident, and that “first impressions” have their effect is unquestionable; but the love—for love it *was*—of Francis for Jane, and the deep interest which she took in him, and he in her, did not arise from any violent or extravagant “first sight” feeling.

The reader, by what he has already seen of the character of Frank Grindle, must have been made aware of the superiority of his mind and principles. Well—introduced (as it would have been better he never had been) to Jane, with whom one hour’s conversation was sufficient to establish her claims to respect and esteem, he naturally and involuntarily—nay, rather against his will—becomes satisfied that she is a very charming person—perhaps the most charming person he has yet met with. Supposing this to be all—as it might have been in an ordinary case—here

the matter was wholly and totally different. Conscious that out of respect to his father's anxiety, and his brother's seniority, it was his duty not to interfere with George's pretensions, not only his prepossession in favour of the lady was to be controlled and subdued, but his moral conviction that his brother was the last man on earth to be the husband of such a creature was to be overruled.

We have seen and heard the sneers and sarcasms with which poor Frank's unobtrusive attempts to moralise, not tediously, boring, or cantingly, have been received by Sir George and his eldest son. It must not thence be inferred that Frank was one of those awful humbugs (no other word can reach them) who deprive themselves of all worldly comfort and amusement, refrain from the ordinary imbibitions of wine, and so on. No, not a bit of it—Frank was really and truly a gentleman. His addiction to scientific pursuits—which in the present day are as much a matter of fashion as any thing else, and are frequently taken up by very silly people who fancy themselves wise, because the financial officers of the societies to which they belong, puff them up in order to get their money, or because they puff themselves—was another subject, as we have heard, of the ridicule of his father and brother who reduced every thing to one standard by a question,—What's the use of it? A man—as Colonel Bruff and a great number of infinitely sillier people (the supposition is difficult) do—goes to a pot-house at Greenwich, and eats whitebait. Well, he eats the fish. What the deuce does it signify to *him* whether it is a young shad or a promising sprat. He drives over Blackheath. What can it matter to him, sitting in his carriage, what the substratum of the macadamised road is composed of? Who cares one farthing what the difference of temperature is, when, in a balloon, you reach the height of fifteen thousand feet in the air? Nobody can build a house there. Fools, they say, build castles in those regions—but what is the object to be attained? Who cares?

These sort of absurd interrogatories were put by George and his father as answers touching inquiries as to the pursuits of Frank, of whom George said one day to the governor, “I'll put a question to Frank the next time we meet, of what he calls a mixed quantity, that will floor him? How far is it from Christmas-day to Westminster-bridge?”

At this sally the worthy baronet was perfectly delighted, and much confirmed in his opinion that the ascertaining the character and qualities of the land we live in was a matter (as the popular political song of some twenty years ago says) “uncommonly low.”

But, as we have just said, what Frank *was*, or *was not*, is not the subject of our present investigation. Where is he?—for very much of our future history depends upon the answer to this question. Whether Sir George and his son were aware of the

place of his then present domestication, and thought it—why one could hardly guess—worth their while to conceal it—or were ignorant of it—it was of course, considering the multiplied intrigues at work, quite impossible to say; but of this the reader may rest assured, that Jane Bruff neither had the slightest knowledge of his destination, nor was she possessed of any possible means of ascertaining it. It is only doing justice to that amiable girl for the said reader to feel satisfied upon this point; which, as our story runs, is really an important one.

Now, during the absence of George Grindle with Ellen, Smylar, whose views and objects the reader can perhaps scarcely yet comprehend, began her course of proceeding. We have already found her, strangely enough, taking part with Jane against her father; or rather, we should say, exciting the poor innocent and confiding girl into rebellion against his authority; to which, up to the present crisis, she had not only implicitly bowed—at least apparently—but which she had always spoken of to Jane as a power not to be either questioned or disputed.

"Well, Miss Jane," said Smylar, one day, after receiving with an extraordinary degree of humility her *orders*,—"well, Miss Jane, have you heard from your devoted George?"

"Yes," said Jane, "I had a letter—a short one—from Paris, which he reached on Thursday evening in safety."

"Oh," said Smylar, "he is safe. Well that's a comfort."

"He will be back, he says, on Wednesday next," said Jane, not exhibiting any very particular signs of satisfaction at the proposition.

"Don't be angry with me," said Smylar, "for asking the question; but have you heard from Mrs. Amersham? You told me the day before yesterday you had written to her. Now, what does *she* say to the proposal of forcing you into the match?"

"I have heard from Mrs. Amersham," said Jane—the which Mrs. Smylar knew as well as herself, inasmuch as no letter ever reached an inmate of the colonel's house without undergoing an exceedingly strict investigation, upon which, unless in a hermetically sealed envelope (a contrivance not in general use for the general post, until the marvellous improvements which have recently been made to produce a uniform rate, which varies more curiously and with an infinitely greater degree of intricacy than any postage ever before contrived) every ingenuity and stage trick of which the minx was capable was put into practice to get at its contents.

"And what does she say?" asked Smylar.

"But little," answered Jane, driven as it were unconsciously in her sad seclusion to make a confidant of the woman she felt she least could trust; but, at the same time, deluded into her present course of conduct towards her by the evident change in her manner and sentiments towards herself.

"Ah," said Smylar, "people of the world are always cautious—always afraid of committing themselves—but surely, Miss Jane, she does not advise your submission to the tyranny with which you are threatened?"

"Perhaps," said Jane, "I did not put the case strongly enough?"

"Then whose fault is *that*?" said Smylar, in a tone and style of animation quite new in her character, especially while arguing against the colonel's views. "You can't like the man—and—but I daren't tell you all—this I will say, you ought not to marry him even if you loved him dearly. You hate him—yes, Miss Jane, you do—so there can be no excuse for doing a—I must not say what—but I will say a cruel action."

"Cruel!" said Jane. "How, cruel? What—

"I tell you you must not ask more about *that*," said Smylar, "but die rather than become the wife of that man."

Now although Jane Bruff certainly had an exceedingly mean opinion of the pretender to her hand, and as certainly did prefer his brother, still when a girl has such an alternative proposed as that of dying or marrying, the most dissident, cold, and even coquettish one in the world would rather go to the altar than the tomb, and Jane ventured to inquire again the particular reason which Smylar had for the violence of her antipathy towards George Grindle—all in vain.

Now the first answer which Jane had received from Mrs. Amersham was not altogether so satisfactory as she could have wished it to be. The truth is, that when she and her husband had entered into a joint determination that their dear young friend and connection should not marry any body against her will, they were both urged to this earnest compact under the conviction that the man she *did* like was Miles Blackmore; and such is the waywardness of the human mind, that when Jane declared to Emma that it was no prepossession in his favour by which she was actuated in endeavouring to avoid a marriage with George Grindle, Mrs. Amersham's zeal and enthusiasm cooled and calmed, and, in point of fact, her answer was full of truisms and general observations, not unmixed with a little advice in the way of caution, for which Jane was perfectly unprepared. In fact, it was clear that the Amershams were disappointed, and even vexed at her insensibility to the attractions and qualities of Miles Blackmore; and so for the moment, or rather on the instant, was the milk of her kindness soured.

'At such a period naturally arose a crisis which Jane did not anticipate. On the one hand she finds her devoted friend somewhat chilled in her advice and protestations of support against the tyranny to which she had told her she was resolved not to submit; and on the other discovers Smylar, in whom even up to the last, as she told Emma in the letter to which hers was an answer, she suspected a bitter enemy, most anxious, most zealous, and positively determined to rescue her from the mar-

tyrdom to which, without her aid, she seemed positively doomed.

It certainly was a critical situation for Jane to be placed in. At one moment she attributed the change in Emma's manner to one cause, in the next to another; but the great danger was that she should in a transport, not of anger, but of disappointment, put herself so far into the power of Smylar, as to adopt her advice, or accept of her assistance.

That Smylar knew where Frank Grindle was, there seems little doubt; that whenever it was possible to institute a comparison between the brothers, unfavourable to George, she did it, is most true; but she never permitted herself to forward the cause of Frank practically, as one might say—appearing only to hold him out to Jane as a bright contrast to his brother. What her ultimate proceedings was to be, was yet—at least to Jane—quite undefinable. That she *had* a scheme in preparation nobody can doubt, because trained and educated as she had been, the expectation of any thing like truth or sincerity in either her character or conduct would have been perfectly ridiculous.

Here let us for a moment leave her. Jane had again written to Emma, describing the extraordinary alteration in Smylar's manner, and enclosing George Grindle's letter from Paris as a specimen of his style—a sort of brick from Babylon. The reader perhaps would like to see it—its brevity will serve as a set-off for its dulness.

“ Hôtel Bourbon,—18—
“ Paris.

“ My dear Miss Bruff,

“ I got here yesterday—deucedly tired and all that—never stopped, except to sleep at Beauvilliers—bad bed—uncomfortable room—and a servant, who by no accident is sharp about such things—restless all night in anxiety to get back—now bothered with lawyers and papers, and all that sort of thing—good hotel—and being here alone and on business only, very snug—dined quietly and so on—I hope to get clear of this the day after to-morrow—I don't know if you like Paris—I used to like it, but you know, thanks to you, that's all changed.

“ The journey seemed twice as long as usual—being quite alone bores me—however it gave me more time to think of you—I hope to bring you over some pretty *bijouterie*—the worthy colonel is, I trust, quite well—I have written to my father, but as we shall soon meet, and I am sure the sooner the better, and I am no great dab at my pen, I will not bore you with any more of my nonsense, only begging you to believe me, my dear Miss Bruff,

“ May I say Jane?
“ Yours truly and affectionately,

“ GEORGE GRINDLE.

The reader ought to know that the graceful writer of this letter never was near the Hôtel Bourbon in Paris, but that it was written at Mrs. Eversfield's at Versailles, and sent into Paris in time for the post, so that the post *mark* might be right. As to his seeing any lawyers, we know better than that, as do we also touching his solitary travelling.

As we have shown *this* letter, let us cast our eyes over that to which he alludes in it, as having been addressed to his worthy father, Sir George Grindle, Baronet.

“Versailles,
“—, 18—.

“Dear Governor,

“I think I shall get on, or rather off, uncommon well—neither she nor her mother has the slightest notion of the truth. I have put them up to believing you to be the most infernal crab of a father that ever crawled, so that they are terrified at your name. She has made up her mind to stay for six months, certain—as for the pledge, of course when things come to be known, he must be taken care of. I wrote to Jane Bruff this morning, full of adoration, after *my* fashion, and all that sort of thing; only I'll just thank you, governor, not to be carrying on there while I am away, for between you, me, and the post, I'll be hanged if I don't think she likes you better than your son and heir—so fair play, that's a jewel.

“I didn't stop in Paris, for reasons—two or three of my *dear* friends are there, who might have asked me for the stumpy duc—that, you know, would have been uncommonly inconvenient. I hope to get away in two days, but I must do the decent with poor Nelly and her mother—she has got another daughter, four years younger than Nelly—I say nothing—but I never *did* see —ch, governor?

“You had better give heavy-heeled Bruff a shove on, as to our marriage; because if it *is* to be, I should like to have it over and settled at the latest in three weeks, because I have promised Henry Flipper to go to him for a week in October, and I should not like to leave Jane till we had been married at least a fortnight. I wish you would say something to her about her hair—she don't do it nice as I like it—she has got a bad maid I think—ugly I know she is—see about this for me, governor. Pitch it into old ‘That'll do,’ and don't go mad after Mother Smylar—nice connexion, governor—never mind—stumpy's the word.

“Yours affectionately,
“GEORGE GRINDLE.

“P.S. What's gone with Frank?—you needn't answer, for two reasons: the first is, I don't care; and the second is, that if I *did*, I could not hear till I got home.”

These were the epistles concocted, propounded, and dispatched on the same day from Versailles, by the all-accomplished Mr. George Grindle.

Now, who can read these letters, and not feel an interest in the fate of the amiable, excellent girl, who is destined to be the wife of the writer, or, in that of the unhappy, beautiful creature, who is doomed to be repudiated?— Yet these are things that do take place in the world.

Surrounded by difficulties, and even dangers, as Jane Bruff unquestionably at this period was, she had not the consolation of knowing how deeply two persons were, at the very period, most disinterestedly interested in her happiness. There can be no doubt, whatever the mystery might be in which Miles Blackmore's affection for and devotion to her—for they must both be admitted—were involved, that whatever he could do to serve or save her, would be done by him. Nor is there any reason to question the warmth of Frank Grindle's feelings towards her, and they, as we have already said, were of a twofold character: his admiration of her mind, her person, her qualities, and accomplishments, was fervent and sincere: but all the ardour which such a sentiment was calculated to excite, was doubled by the dread of her enduring perpetual misery in a union with his brother; knowing at the same moment, that the connexion was the chief object of his father's heart, and that he, of course, of all men in the world, ought not to thwart or oppose it.

Where Frank was, seemed to be a question. What he had said about a sick friend at Leamington, however looked upon as a *ruse*, was in point of fact true. Sir George Grindle, amongst other antipathies, hated with all the force of hatred, his brother-in-law, Mr. Francis Leeson, the maternal uncle and godfather of his son Frank; and strange to say, the kinder this brother-in-law proved himself to his nephew, the more violent became the dislike of Sir George, whose devotion to his first-born blinded him to every thing except his preferment and promotion. In fact, the soreness, or irritation, or whatever it was, or whencesoever arising, had reached such a pitch, that the name of Mr. Leeson was never heard in the family; and whenever Frank went to visit his kind and exemplary relation (and when he did, he rarely mentioned the circumstance), his father affected a perfect ignorance of his proceedings.

Now it so happened, that Frank had received a letter from his uncle from Leamington, to which gay and pretty place he had betaken himself in order to [REDACTED] ^{the usual date of all his dis} Not that the practice of [REDACTED] ^{have been,} after staying something

[REDACTED]

(no matter what), disagreed with him, and according to George Colman,

“ Week pass'd after week, in weekly succession,
Till his *weakly* condition was past all expression ;”

and he quitted the Clarendon Hotel and its comforts for the sea-coast, whether it appears that his affectionate nephew forthwith followed him. So much for *his* destination, which has appeared somehow mystified, but which has not been known to us, simply because, under the circumstances of the family disagreement to which we have just referred, Sir George himself was not aware of it.

As to George Grindle and Ellen, considering what that amiable young ex-lieutenant of dragoons has imparted to his father, our researches need not be very actively pursued. He, and his fair victim, and “the pledge,” arrived safely at the residence of Mrs. Eversfield, which need, perhaps, be no more minutely described, than as being in one of those houses, the back windows of which, to use a French phrase, gives to the gardens, or (to use another French phrase) the park of the palace.

There is in the town of Versailles a calmness and silence, over which the palace seems to domineer, and although within ten miles of the capital, it affords a sweet and almost solemn seclusion to those who, like Mrs. Eversfield and her daughters, were forced to live on the continent, enlivened and cheered chiefly by the *agrément* derivable from the enjoyment of the walks in the royal domain.

And now, says the reader, who is Mrs. Eversfield?—and who, and what are her daughters?—for it has been seen that she has two. What manner of woman can *she* be, who sanctions the intimacy and intercourse between Ellen and George Grindle, and who receives her back again into her house, in order that she may make it a temporary residence? That question cannot, perhaps, yet be conveniently answered—but such things have happened before. That her second daughter was even handsomer than her elder sister, appears in evidence from George's letter to his worthy father. What was *she* intended for? Mrs. Eversfield was visited, and had little *et u sucréé soirées*; she was exceedingly regular in her religious duties; there was no scandal about her house, or rather her *étage*; and when Ellen returned, she was not only received with the sincerest blessings and most affectionate embraces but a little *réunion* was made for the ex-members of the party, whom she had left at [redacted] upon her return.

All this [redacted] dreadful feeling by [redacted] is inevitably visit [redacted] king—he

saw his child handed from one to another of Mrs. Eversfield's friends and neighbours—praised for his beauty and admired for his precocity—and what then?—every word of approbation, which ought to have rung joyously in the ears of a father, struck discordantly upon his; the child they admired he was about to abandon; the mother they felicitated, he was on the point of repudiating.

Ellen's pleasure at meeting with her old associates, and the absolute delight which she felt in again finding herself pressed to her mother's affectionate heart, had excited her, and raised her spirits to a pitch which they had not latterly attained. This natural and surely excusable alteration of manner, at once gratified and soured our amiable ex-lieutenant of dragoons. He felt jealous that she should seem happy when he was so soon to quit her, and pleased that she was so charmed with the society to which in four-and-twenty hours he meant to abandon her—**FOR EVER!**

The strangeness of mankind, the perverseness of human nature, could not, perhaps, be more strongly illustrated than in this very case. Determined as he was upon this eternal separation, the sight of Miles Blackmore's stick, as handed by Ellen to Tiney, seemed to awaken feelings which every reasonable person could not fail to think wholly incompatible with the views and intentions which unquestionably occupied his mind, when he mentioned the name and address of her mother to the owner of the said stick at Abbeville.

We have little to keep us long at Versailles. We are not there for pleasure. We have not visited it to criticise the repairs of the palace by the present King of the French; or to contrast them with the original taste and design of Louis Quatorze; or trace the prevalence of the prejudices of Louis Dixhuit in favour of England, in the alterations he made in its gardens. We are merely there on business, and that—more the sorrow and shame—but brief.

It was delightful to see, even under the impending affliction of parting from George, how happy Ellen seemed at being again in the society and under the roof of her mother—the way she clung to her, as it were, during the evening—the security with which she clasped her hands in hers, and the gaiety with which she danced a quadrille, with George as her partner, while Tiney, to whom such diversions were a perfect novelty, laughed until he almost cried, at the music and the *quadrillers*.

While this is going on, we must again glance hastily to Harley-street, ~~inasmuch as the period of George's absence was that during which Mrs. Smylar proposed to carry her great scheme into execution.~~

Jane, when we last left her, was expecting another letter from Emma Amersham, in answer to one which she had written her, expressive of something like disappointment at the tone of hers

—the one about which Mrs. Smylar had been so solicitous. She received the second letter, and thus it ran :

"—, —18—

"Dearest Jane,

" You write to me as if you were dissatisfied with my last letter to you. My sweet girl, you must surely see and appreciate the difficulty which I have—and I have consulted the plain good sense of my husband too—in advising any step which must inevitably bring you into direct hostility with your father.

" May you not, dear Jane, as you have so solemnly protested that your heart was free and disengaged, have formed too hasty an opinion of this Mr. Grindle ? Mr. Amersham has made some inquiries about him from some of his single friends, and there seems nothing objectionable in his character. He is gay—of that you will care him ; he is young—in that respect, time will improve him ; but I do think that you have taken too strong a prejudice against him.

" If—and I here revert to my original position—if you had been, as I always did think you were, sufficiently pleased with a certain gentleman who shall now be nameless, to have declared in his favour, I would, as I have already said, have fought your battle with papa ; but as that is not the case—as your position in the world is not as agreeable as it might be—why not resolve, not to rush into a connexion of so serious a character rashly or hastily, but to look more calmly, and if I may say so, Jane, more reasonably at the proposition.

" Knowing nothing of your feelings, except negatively, I cannot of course sympathise with you if any thing has occurred since we parted to influence your affections. As the matter comes before me, I honestly confess I cannot understand the cause of your apparent resolution to disobey your father.

" Write to me, dearest Jane—tell me all—be entirely what you ever were before,—candid and sincere, and give me better reasons than those you have hitherto sent me, for rejecting this young man. Of one thing assure yourself, that in me and my husband you will ever find two firm and unflinching friends, and that we are both—for he is standing by me while I write—your most affectionate,

" J. & E. AMERSHAM."

It must be confessed, that as a sequel to the letter with which Jane had been disappointed, this was by no means consolatory. It seemed to *her* to have been dictated by the feelings to which we have ourselves before referred—that if she did not marry Miles Blackmore, it became a matter of indifference to the Amershams whom she married, and with such a feeling their persuasions were naturally in favour of the lover of her father's selection. In all probability Jane's views would have coincided

with theirs, and she would have argued *filially* with herself in their favour; but unfortunately during the interval between the receipt of these two epistles, she had permitted herself to listen to the counsels of Smylar, and that too with the conviction of her treachery strong upon her mind. The truth is, that such a girl as Jane had no chance in the world against the cunning of the housekeeper. The coldness, as Jane felt it, of her dear friend Emma, was unfortunately contrasted with the warmth and energy of her (in fact) inveterate enemy; and urged by a thousand contending feelings to which her heart had hitherto been a stranger, she suffered herself to be soothed and encouraged by the specious menial, until unconsciously she found herself in open rebellion against the father whom, to this hour, she had piously and implicitly obeyed.

"I think, Miss Jane," said Smylar, "that Mrs. Amersham, although she *is* your friend, is afraid of advising you for the best, or perhaps has been written to by the colonel on the subject."

This remark will serve to announce to the reader the fact that Jane had proceeded so far in her downward course of confidential communications, as to have shown Mrs. Smylar the letter.

"Still," said Jane, "all she says is true, and just, and right."

"Why perhaps," said Smylar, "if she or her husband knew all I know, they might not think so; but this I know—and know it to my cost—a marriage of hands without hearts, is certain misery. I could instance in my own case the sorrows it produces, the dangers in which it involves both parties, and in most instances—not in mine, thank Providence—the disgrace it entails upon them. Besides, the brother of this man who, except as far as the title goes, is worth ten of him, is, to say the least, agreeable to you—the little you have seen of his manners and conversation you like—why should the colonel force you to marry the other?"

"With my father," said Jane, "although not with *me*, the title, is an object. But I go further than this—why force me to marry at all?"

"To be sure," said Smylar, "why indeed—why shouldn't you remain as you are, the prop of his declining age, the mistress of his home and his comfort?"

"Perhaps," said Jane, flattering herself that she was playing a deep game with her skilful antagonist—"perhaps my father may have some intention of marrying again, and hence his anxiety for my settlement in the world."

"Marry again!" said Smylar, with a look expressive of the consummate absurdity of such a supposition—"No, I should think not—no, rely upon it, *that* is not the reason—I know better than that—the only advice, I can give you, and I give

it with all sincerity and truth, is not to marry Mr. George Grindle."

"But how avoid it," said Jane, "if my father presses it?"

"If he presses it," said Smylar; "why I have heard that as he is at present resolved, he means the marriage to take place next Thursday-week."

"What?" said Jane, "even the day fixed without either my consent or knowledge, and that too before I have even conditionally accepted the offer?"

"So I hear," said Smylar, "and the way I heard it, was through the tradesmen, who have been ordered to have every thing in readiness by that day, or rather the day before."

"This is proceeding rapidly," said Jane.

"That's what I mean, dear," said Smylar, gloating with a fiend-like satisfaction on the countenance of poor Jane, characterized as it was by anxiety as to the course she should adopt, and of gratitude to her companion for her information, and warm solicitude for her escape from eternal wretchedness.

"No time is to be lost," continued Smylar, "nor should you hesitate. Your friends, Mr. and Mrs. Amersham, are no doubt exceedingly happy themselves, and perhaps wish to avoid anything like interference with your father's views or wishes: but you can any day of your life force them into upholding you, if the colonel persists in his determination."

"How can *that* be done?" said Jane, her eyes beaming with a hope of alleviation of her distress.

"Trust me, when the time comes," said Smylar, "and never fear. When the colonel mentions his immovable resolve about the match, and the day fixed for the marriage, resist him—that is, I advise only as I should myself act under similar circumstances. The result of your opposition will be his anger, and will most probably strengthen his firmness, and perhaps hurry his intended conclusion of the affair—that will produce a crisis—at that moment my counsel will be available to you; act upon *that*, and every thing will turn out as you wish."

"But will this occur through your influence over my father?" said Jane.

"*My* influence!" answered Smylar. "You will continue to labour under that mistake into which you and your friend Mrs. Amersham, I know, have fallen, upon the subject of my influence over your father. I may influence his selection of a dinner when he dines at home; I may induce him to take care of himself when he goes out; but in matters of a family nature, what have I to do, but obey his orders? Only when I see things in progress, which I have every reason to expect will turn out ill, I feel myself justified in doing good to others, as I should hope and wish that they would do good to me."

"Still, Smylar, I do not understand—" said Jane.

"Never mind *that*," interrupted her companion; "perhaps your father *may* relent when he sees you firm—I confess that it is not very likely;—but if he should not, it will be then quite time enough for me to make any suggestion."

The colonel's well-known knock at the street-door here put an end to the dialogue between Jane and her new ally, who had, as it is evident, already succeeded in weaning her confidence from the Amershams to herself, in spite of Jane's experience of her character, and conviction of her duplicity. Still divided as she was between her belief in her ability, and in the influence over her father, which she so resolutely denied, the near approach of the threatened event drove her as it were into her power. The cause of all this may be discovered in the simple fact, that Jane had never loved before. The peculiarity of the relative positions between the loved one and the one abhorred, gave new spirit to her hatred, and thus acted upon almost unconsciously, yet as she felt too powerfully, by two contending passions, she fled for succour into the arms of the harpy whose sole object was her ruin and destruction, because her advice and suggestions were more in accordance with her excited feelings, and her view of the dangers and difficulties of the case, more consonant with her hopes and wishes than those of her dear and sincere friends, the Amershams.

As the saying goes, "There are spots on the sun," and scarcely can a diamond be found without a flaw. The whole head and front of Jane's offending, was her sensitive dread of admitting to her dearest friend Emma the weakness, as she had always hitherto held it, of falling in love—and that too as it must necessarily appear upon the face of her admission—of falling in love at first sight. Had they been domesticated together in their ordinary habits of intimacy and familiarity, there is no doubt that the important secret would have been disclosed; indeed, with Jane's ingenuousness of character and countenance, concealment from her friend when *with* her, would have been impossible. But to write—to record the real state of the case, and admit that so shortly, nay, so immediately after their separation, she could have formed a serious attachment for an almost stranger—was more than Jane could muster courage to do. She had spoken of him favourably in her letters to Emma, but not more than once, and then casually, as instituting a comparison between his manners and conversation and those of his brother; nor had her feelings towards him then acquired the strength which his absence, and the constant effect of contrast produced by the presence of George, had since given them. She felt that she would give the world to pass one day with the Amershams; but she was almost sure her father would refuse her the favour; and while she was thinking over in her mind whether she should ask him to let her go to them, Mrs. Smylar, opportunely or inopportunely, as the case may be, contrived to insinuate *herself* into the

this to be all—~~as it was~~

poor girl's good graces, and divert her interests, if not her affections, from the Amershams.

The reader may easily imagine that the change made by Jane in her counsellor is not likely to turn out to her advantage. Perhaps he may also anticipate the object that counsellor has in view. How she sets to work to accomplish it, will be seen in our next chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

"Well, dear George," said Ellen : "I feel happy, even in the midst of my sorrow at losing you. You will be safer from the tyrant governor, as you call him, and I shall wait in hope, always beaming hope, dear George, to find you released—somehow, but how I can scarcely tell—from the difficulties in which I feel but too deeply I have contributed to involve you."

"You are a trump, Nelly," said George, "and don't trouble yourself about involvements. I'm rather bogged, as we say at Melton : but take my word for it, I'll be out and clear before long, and then—"

"Then," interrupted Ellen, "you will come back to me and our dear boy. When—when do you think there will be a chance of seeing you?"

"Why," said George, looking first upwards, and then downwards, and then mysteriously, the whole history of his nearly-approaching marriage revolving in his mind at the moment—"why, I can't say to a week or so—because, you see, I have promised myself to two or three country-houses, and I like shooting—and the people there like *me*—and—"

"Why should they not like you?" said Ellen, pressing his arm ; "and why should you not enjoy your shooting if you like *that*? Dear George, I am not selfish—I am happy in the highest degree of happiness when you are with me ; but I am not unhappy when you are away, if I feel sure that you yourself are happy where you are."

"Poor Nell!" said George.*

"But," continued she, "do—do be back by the fifth of October—that *is*, if you can."

"What's the fifth of October?" said George. "I have heard the old song, which says,

"Remember, remember,
The fifth of November ;"

"but what the deuce is the fifth of October?"

"Have you forgotten?" said Ellen, looking anxiously in his face; "you never forgot it before."

"Gone," said George, "all blank—no notion."

"Why, my dear George," said she, "it is our Tiney's birthday—he will be four years old next October. Come, come, you are only joking—you did not forget it—it was only to tease me you said so. Wherever we have been, you never allowed any engagement to interfere with your dining at home on *that* day. You really are *too* bad, George."

And she pushed him playfully from her. All this dialogue occurred while they were walking round the basin of Neptune—Tiney as usual running before them.

"Why," said George, "as to October—oh! I do recollect now—yes—but it will interfere deucedly with the first burst of pheasants—still—"

"Pheasants?" said Ellen; "but there have been pheasants and battues every year since Tiney was born—still you have contrived to be with us."

"Yes," answered the amiable gentleman, "that's true; but then you know we were in England. *There* one may spare a day from shooting to perform the duties of paternity, and play pappy, as you say—but in France—I—"

"We were in France before," said Ellen, "on Tiney's birthday; you didn't mind the pheasants *then*."

"No—no," said Mr. Grindle, "not as to pheasants. The fact is—I don't much care—but—"

And here came into his mind a notion of at once breaking the whole truth to her; but no—he had not courage to endure her reproaches, or perhaps to witness her agonies, and so he went on.

"But the places to which I am going this year, are of what may be called the sober order. I think of giving myself a dose, in order that I may do some good with the governor."

"Do," said Ellen, "whatever is best for yourself; and when I say so, I feel that I advise you not without selfishness; for whatever is good for *you*, must be eventually good for *me* and our dear child. But go, George—go where you choose—do not let a fond mother's prejudices draw you hither upon any particular day. If I know your heart, I know that the first glass of wine you drink after dinner on the fifth of October, will be drunk silently to the health and happiness of that dear little child, the very likeness of yourself."

"Do they say he is like *me*?" said George.

"Do you not see it yourself?" said Ellen.

"Can't say I do," said the affectionate parent. "I think he's an uncommon pretty pup."

"Oh!" said the confiding girl, "how you talk, George."

And now here is the mischief of this affair. If George had been one of the pink and white faced, fiddle-faddle, low puppies, qualk-

fied by all their personal and mental qualities to figure behind the counters of Messrs. Howell and James, or Messrs. Swan and Edgar, and had been pursuing the heartless course which we too well know has been adopted by our present friend, it would not have mattered half so much. To be sure, in that case he most probably would not have succeeded in the first instance, with Ellen ; but if George had not, with all his frivolities and pretensions to a place in class B of legitimate dandyism, had talent of a certain character, accomplishments to a certain extent, and conversational powers of a certain quality, he never could have so deeply interested his victim, as the reader, knowing all he does know, must regret to see that he has effectually done. If she had felt equally indifferent towards him—if she, in fact, had *not* loved him—their eternal separation might have been a wise and salutary proceeding for both of them ; but we know the difference—we know that she, devoted to him, believed him to be the most devoted, affectionate, and honourable of human beings.

But now, of Mrs. Eversfield and Ellen's younger sister—who was she—or who were they ? as Macbeth says,

“ What are these ? ”

Here comes a difficulty. Mrs. Eversfield was a widow ; she had resided at Versailles for six years. She was the mother of Ellen, and of course, of Ellen's sister, and certainly under all the circumstances of the case, the extraordinary *liaison* between one of her girls with Mr. George Grindle, the existence of Tiney, and the quiet, yet highly-respectable manner in which the lady—in other days it might have been considered decent to call her old lady—lived, and “ received ” in the evenings, to her coffee and *eau sucrée*, in her exceedingly pretty salon and boudoir, require some explanation. But the historian is himself at fault, and whatever his anxiety may be to enlighten the reader, he is at this period of his narrative wholly incapacitated from doing so, for the strongest of all possible reasons—he knows nothing.

No—the history of all the persons before us, developing itself only gradually and, as it were, chronologically, the time has not yet arrived when we can get at the truth of rumours, which certainly were prevalent at Versailles, the premature mention of which might, if it did not injure the interests of the parties concerned, damage those of the narrative.

The following morning was fixed for George's departure. The little *soiree* at Mrs. Everfield's, which was a sort of commonplace, or rather every-night occurrence, inasmuch as the evening promenades came in just as they had been walking, was to Ellen sad and sorrowful ; even George, as it grew later, began to feel less lively, or perhaps it might be better to say, the hardness of his cruel heart was in some degree softened as the hour of going approached. A quiet discerner of effects certainly might have per-

ceived a kind of shudder through his frame as he kissed the forehead of Tiney, when his *bonne* came to take him to bed. Ellen saw it, and blessed her loved one for his paternal feeling.

"George," said she, "don't mind: you shall see him again before you go."

Poor Ellen!

If, as most truly they are, partings are pangs to the parting parties themselves, it does not seem absolutely necessary to inflict upon the reader the details of that which occurred on the morning of the day following this scene. The grief of Ellen, earnest and sincere as it was, was qualified by the belief that the temporary separation would be beneficial to her beloved, and by the certainty of possessing her adored child. His seriousness—for it amounted to little more than that—arose from the consciousness of his real views and intentions, acted upon at the crisis by feelings which even *he* could not entirely control when parting from the once-worshipped idol of his heart—the mother of his child. This conflict, perceptible enough in his countenance and manner, convinced Ellen of the earnestness of his affection for her; and when the last farewell kiss had been exchanged, it was with confidence and certainty that she said, or rather sobbed, "Remember Tiney's birthday."

Mrs. Eversfield had a difficult task to perform in soothing her amiable daughter after George's departure; and the sports of Tiney, yet too young to miss his father's presence, while dear mamma remained, only aggravated her grief. However, he was soon dispatched with his *bonne* into the gardens, where he took "stick" exercise upon the still-favourite cane of Mr. Miles Blackmore, until it was time for him to have his dinner.

George had some reason to be vain of his own importance. By his departure from Versailles and his consequent approach to London, he was causing the deepest pain to two charming girls—the one, to be sure, standing in an exceedingly different position from the other. Jane shone in all the mild purity of truth and virtue; Ellen with equally good qualities, with a devoted and affectionate heart, and who, in all the accomplishments of the world, might successfully vie with her unconscious rival, was sullicid by a cloud—an incomprehensible history had marred her fate and darkened her prospects. How this should have happened, as it evidently *had* happened, under the sanction, or if not under the sanction, at least with the knowledge and connivance of her mother, still living in esteem and respect at Versailles, sounds at first strange and startling; but it may be, that whatever Mrs. Eversfield's motives were for sanctioning, as it is by this time quite evident she did, such a connexion for her daughter, they did not necessarily interfere with her personal respectability, in her present residence, so long as her daughter appeared under her roof as the wife of the eldest son of an English baronet, by whose name she was *there* invariably addressed. In

the Regent's Park she was Mrs. Greenford, and this *alias* had been of course by her own consent adopted, in order to render her and George secure from any tyrannical measures of "the governor."

Jane had received a second letter from her hopeful intended, and was therefore fully prepared for his arrival; nor was she rendered at all easier in her mind by a professional interview which she was directed to have with the colonel's solicitor—the precise purport or intention of which she did not clearly understand at the time it took place, farther than that it was really and truly an actual preliminary to all that she most dreaded upon earth.

"Jenny," said the colonel, after their *tête-à-tête* dinner that day, "I think Sir George and I have settled all our matters, and there will be little now left but signing and sealing. George will be back to-morrow, or at farthest the day after, and we propose Monday week for the wedding."

"Sir!" said Jane, pale and trembling.

"Yes," continued Bruff, "we had first thought of Thursday, but the things cannot be got ready—the law's delays, and all *that*—and the coachmaker—and—"

"But Monday-week!" said Jane; "for whose wedding?"

"Why, yours to be sure," answered the colonel.

"Oh, father!" said Jane—

"That'll do—that'll do," interrupted the father, "no crying—no nonsense. What must be, must—you must be *My Lady*—I like it—*my* will is law—no snivelling."

"But," said Jane, "I have made no preparations."

"What d'ye mean by preparations?" said the colonel; "you have got gowns and bonnets, and all the rest of it—it makes me sick to hear of fine dresses, and all other matters of that sort being bought, because a girl is going to be married;—just as if she had lived without clothes all the time she was single—it's all nonsense—what the French call a *corbillly* or some such stuff."

"But, really," said Jane—

"That'll do—no nonsense," said Bruff. "Monday-week by half-past ten o'clock you will be Mrs. Grindle."

A sudden tremor thrilled through the poor girl's frame; save and except that she was not a fine lady, she would have fainted; against the oppression she felt on her heart amidst the darkening mist which almost veiled her eyes, she struggled, and struggled successfully.

"I will leave you now, sir," said Jane, "the lights are in the drawing-room—I cannot argue—but—let me write to you—let me implore—"

"Stuff!" said the colonel. "Write! why write and waste paper?—better talk and waste words—it is all of no use—I am your father, and will be obeyed."

Saying which, he rang the bell for the servants with a violence well suited to an occasion in which "*ringing a belle*," in another sense of the words, was the object of discussion.

It was usual, as we know, in that family, for Mrs. Smylar to superintend the colonel's single cup of coffee, taken by him in the dining-room previous to his going up stairs ; although that lady would have denied the fact (no doubt upon oath, had it been necessary); and, as usual, no sooner had Jane been served with coffee in the boudoir, than Smylar proceeded to administer the accustomed beverage to the colonel. Jane, at the same time, sitting down to fulfil her intention of addressing a written appeal to her father against his hasty decision with regard to the marriage, hoped that she could say more in writing than she could by speaking to him, and that too with no chance of the abrupt interruption to which her oral pleadings would have been liable.

"Smylar," said the colonel, when the Hebe had placed the odorous draught before her Jove,—"sit down, Smylar—I want to say a few words to you. Is the outer-door fast?"

"Close as wax, colonel," said the lady.

"Well, then," said Bruff, "the fact is, this girl of mine is running restive—rusty I used to call it—she hums and haws to the marriage—cries—turns pale—and what she calls 'implores me'—eh? and as for Monday week—oh, 'the time is so short'—'the proposal so abrupt'—that won't do, Smylar—I have, I believe, but one peculiarity in my character—it's not an uncommon one—I *will* have my way—when I say a thing shall be done, it shall be done."

"You are quite right, colonel," said Mrs. Smylar.

"That'll do," said the colonel, "you're on *my* side then. Well now, don't you think—for you know with all my anxiety about this match, and that sort of thing, and getting her settled, so that we may probably manage matters more economically afterwards, and all that—you know—eh? you see—ha—ha—ha."

"Oh, colonel," said Mrs. Smylar; "naughty colonel—I'm sure I don't in the least understand what you mean—but—"

"That'll do," said Bruff, chuckling and pinching the delicate *patella* of his fair companion, "never mind what's to follow: but I see no objection to the match—I say to myself, it's a good match—a suitable match—eh? and a deucedly nice young fellow."

"Nice!" said Smylar; "why, my dear colonel, if Miss Jane were to look round all London, she couldn't find a nicer. He is handsome—exceedingly agreeable, as you say—he has a certain rank—a certain fortune, and is, as they say, in a certain circle—what can she want more?"

"That's it," said Bruff—"that's what I can quite fathom—there's something—eh? some other attachment."

"It is quite impossible for me to say," said Smylar; "for I would sooner die than speak to Miss Jane on the subject. Indeed, I don't think she likes me sufficiently to permit me to touch upon it, even if I wished. But this I *do* say, that with such prospects before her, and such a desirable connexion, I would, if I were you, ~~one~~, by whose name she was never ~~all~~ known."

say it must be done—you *shall* marry Mr. Grindle, or out of my house you go!"

"That'll do," said Bruff: "just what I mean to say—just as if you had dived into my mind and raked out my thoughts—and so she shall; and look, in the midst of all this, she never backs up her own dislike to this match with any remonstrances or conditions from her dear friend, Mrs. Amersham."

"How *can* she?" said Smylar; "depend upon it, if we—I beg pardon—if you knew the truth, you would find that these very people are in favour of her complying with your wishes about the marriage. Why, it is obviously for her advantage; a girl brought up without the protection of a mother—a girl full of delicacy and feeling—doesn't it stand to reason that her settlement in life as the wife of such a person as the future Sir George Grindle is an object of first-rate importance?"

"All right, Smylar, all right," said Bruff; "that'll do—you are so clear—all straightforward—see ahead."

"Why," said Smylar, "it is in *our* craft—for I still fancy I smell the lamp—the system to render the history of human life condensed into two acts; one of successful deception upon parents, and a consequent result, no matter how attained, in which the old people are first duped, and then brought to concession and forgiveness and the matter generally ends with a song or a dance. In real life, the unities are perhaps better preserved, and not having, my dear colonel, the slightest feeling one way or another, disconnected with your interests, and those of your dear, interesting daughter, I would say, 'do a little wrong, to do a great right,' and force her if necessary to the furtherance of her own advantage, and the security of her own happiness, by insisting upon this marriage."

"I mean *that*," said Bruff; "from *that*, the main point, nothing shall divert me; but, as to time—Monday-week—do you see what I mean?—it may hurry her. She is a shy, weak, and, as I take it, a silly creature—but if we were to put it off—a week or two, or so—eh?"

"Wrong, colonel, wrong," said Smylar; "the longer time you give her for deliberation, the worse your chance; besides, at the end of that lengthened term you will still have to force her, and *I* should say with less chance of softening her feelings towards yourself: force is force, and from what you say, I conclude that you *must* force her into this match. Well! what *can* it signify whether she is forced into compliance on Monday-week or Monday-month?"

"That'll do," said Bruff; "no—you are right—every thing will be ready—carriage, settlements, all. You'll hurry the milliners, and all that sort of thing. I am sure you are right, Smylar—as you always are. Monday-week *shall* be the day, and as to her appeal, I won't hear it."

"Why," said Smylar, "of course, I have the highest regard for

Miss Jane, but if you *have* made up your mind, it is only irritating yourself to read what she may write. I—”

—“But,” interrupted Bruff, “do you never talk to her on these subjects?”

“Me! colonel,” said Smylar; “me! as I have told you over and over again, I believe that Miss Jane would sooner consult any one of the housemaids upon her affairs than me! No—she hates me too cordially—a bad return, perhaps, for my solicitous care for her; but still, all people, you know, must have their likings and dislikings.”

“Ha, ha,” said the colonel, again practically exemplifying his view of *likings*, by another gentle pressure upon the lady’s knee. “She is a simpleton—ch? silly girl—not alive to her own interests; but I wonder, after what I said about giving her hints and gentle suggestions, that you hadn’t done a little to forward the affair.”

“Why,” said Smylar, “I *have* done a little, and *that* little quite as much as I felt I could do. I have praised Mr. George to her, and said what an uncommon nice-looking person he was, and then I thought she snubbed me; and you know I have no opportunities of talking to her.”

“Well,” said Bruff, “I’ll give you one this evening—I will not go up stairs—I’ll go to the Doldrum—I want to see Sir George, and—I want a little quiet, and so—look here; when I am gone—I shan’t announce my going—you go to her, and you—but I needn’t tell you what to say. Put her mind in the right way, and get the matter done; and *then*—” This sentence here abruptly terminated by another gentle pinch of the patella.

“Why,” said Smylar (throwing up those brilliant eyes, which in other days had martyred walking-gentlemen, scene-shifters, and link-boys), “why, what *can* I say? It is hard to turn a young heart from its affections, colonel—indeed, if farther advanced in life, the devotion to one object becomes a matter of—”

Hereabouts Mrs. Smylar looked sentimental, and crocodilized a ready-prepared tear. The colonel looked at her, first without, and then with his spectacles, and then giving a third pinch at the patella, said,

“That’ll do—that’ll do.”

“And *I*,” said Smylar, “will do all I can in this business; for I am sure it would be the very best thing that could happen; and as I said before, if you have fixed Monday-week, why shouldn’t it be Monday-week? all the postponements in the world are of no use, if the affair is to come off.”

“That’ll do,” said Bruff; “so now I’ll march myself down to the club. My absence will give you a seasonable opportunity for talking to the girl—and then to-morrow morning—I don’t suppose I shall see you again to-night—you’ll tell me what has happened—report progress, as they say in the House of Commons,

and ask leave—which *you* need never do, to ‘sit again to-morrow.’”

“Hadn’t you better have the carriage?” said Smylar.

“Carriage!” exclaimed the gigantic colonel. “What are my legs made for, but to carry me? No, no, the walk does me good: so you make your retreat—then I shall ring for my cloak—march off—and in the interim you will just instil *my* notions, which are yours too, into Miss Jenny’s mind—she’s an obstinate jade, but she must knock under, you know; when I *am* determined, I am not to be beaten.”

And so Mrs. Smylar took leave for the purpose of entering upon her embassy. Whether she and the colonel shook hands at parting, or whether he exacted the salute due to his military rank from so civil a servant as his ringleted housekeeper, it is impossible to surmise—she went *her* way. He rang his bell, and having been duly cloaked, paraded the pavement with all the dignity of a field-marshall, till he reached the door of the Doldrum.

Ten minutes after the departure of the illustrious bore, saw Smylar standing at the right hand of Jane, who had nearly concluded her written appeal to the said bore, which appeal still lay open before her, waiting only for some of those pointings, and dotings, and dashings, which invariably distinguish the literary productions of ladies.

“Is that *you*, Smylar?” said Jane, her eyes almost *mystified* (not *mystified*) by the atmosphere of a London room, in what would perhaps by some people be still called a summer’s evening, but which others might fancy was growing somewhat autumnal.

“Yes, Miss Jane,” said Smylar: “Taylor told me that the colonel was gone out, and so knowing you were alone I just came in to see if there was anything you wanted.”

“Not I,” said Jane: “the one sole object of my thoughts is this approaching marriage. I know your opinion, not only of the seemingly needless hurry in the matter, but I know your opinion of the man. Now, Smylar, I have written to my father, because I know I never should be able to speak my remonstrances against this proceeding, upon which depends the misery or comfort of my future life.”

“Poor dear Miss Jane,” said Smylar, “how I do feel for you, recollecting what I myself have suffered!”

“Read *that*, Smylar,” said Jane: “do you think it will have any effect upon my father?—if it has not, what upon earth can I say more?”

Smylar, glorying in her triumph, her eyes sparkling with delight, took the paper, and read:—

“Dearest Father,

“From the earliest days of my existence which I can remember,

to the present moment, the whole study and object of my life have been to obey your commands, and ever, as I hope and trust, to anticipate your will and your wishes. I cannot reproach myself with a single act of disobedience, nor, if it be possible, will I yet be guilty of one: therefore is it, dearest father, that with the greatest reliance upon your affection, and in the firm hope of your justice, I implore and entreat you to relax your present command as regards your final disposal of me—your last transfer of me, from your paternal care and protection at a period so rapidly approaching as that which you fixed for my marriage.

"My heart, my dear father, is devoted to you—my whole object is the fulfilment of all your expectations; but indeed, indeed, this trial is too severe—the decision too sudden. I have told you candidly and unreservedly, that, whatever may be the merits of Mr. George Grindle, I cannot duly appreciate them, nor, were I more susceptibly alive to them, have I, according to my own feelings, been sufficiently associated with him, to do either those or myself justice.

"It may be possible—although do not, my dear sir, think that I believe it is—that upon further acquaintance, the views I now take may be changed, and that I may learn to esteem Mr. Grindle, and so far regulate my feelings as to induce an obedience to your will. At present, death would be preferable to me, compared with a marriage with that gentleman.

"Having said this, my dearest father, let me again urge upon you the needless cruelty of forcing me into *any* marriage. I seek no such connexion. I am quite happy. Allow me, when you wish either to leave town without me, or remain in town when you wish *me* to leave it, to go to the Amershams, who are always kindly glad to receive me, and in whose hospitable house I am always happy. Dearest father, you may trust me. I have no object in declining what you now press upon me—no prior attachment—no idea whatever of counteracting your views, or thwarting your designs in any respect—all I implore you is, to leave me as I am. I pledge you my honour and my duty, which never up to this period have wavered, that no human being shall ever obtain an influence over me, nor be permitted even to attempt to do so, without your being instantly apprised of it; that I never will admit into my heart or mind, or cherish one thought or feeling regarding any human being without your sanction and approbation. All I ask, and I ask it on my knees, is, do not force me into that which, as I have said before, is to *me* more dreadful than death itself.

"At present, what I seek for is time, and that request surely you will grant me on the score of delicacy. Mr. George Grindle, who is destined in ten or eleven days to become my husband, has never even made a proposal to me, tending to the point which you inform me authoritatively it is his object to attain. So that, as far as I am personally concerned, I am up to this moment uninformed even of his wishes or intentions upon the subject.

"But oh! my dear, dear father, do let me entreat you, again and again, to stay your hand before you inflict this blow. I ask nothing of you—I will ask nothing of you. I want no fortune. I never will seek a fortune at your hands. All I implore is, that you will allow me to remain single until circumstances effect a change in my views and feelings, or an attachment, such as you shall fully approve, may induce me to throw myself upon your kindness and consideration in forming a matrimonial connexion. Pray, pray, dearest, dearest father, grant me this negative favour. I ask for nothing—I ask only to be spared a sacrifice which must cost me my happiness, perhaps my life."

"Yours devotedly, dutifully, and affectionately,
"JANE BRUFF."

"Very effective indeed," said Smylar, as she laid the paper down on the table: "not above two lengths and a half, and, I should say, a dead hit."

Jane, to whom the technical jargon of the playhouse was Hebrewic, did not at once comprehend that the great geniuses of the lamp—not the genii—measure the manuscripts of their parts in plays by what they call lengths, consisting of so much copy, and that the word effective is applied to any thing likely to be what the heroines of the sawdust and orange-peel school, call a "hit." Smylar was quite alive to the force of the remonstance, and most anxious to recommend Jane to transmit it, and accordingly counselled her to lose no time in letting her father receive it.

"But," said Jane, "do you think he really *will* attend to it—will he soften his harsh determination?"

"I should say yes," said Smylar, "but—and that is what vexes me,—since you have told me all your feelings—what vexes me is, the coldness of your friends the Amershams. I am sure, quite sure, that you ought not to mind the alteration in Mrs. Amersham's tone; you ought to cultivate *them*; they are strong allies to fall back upon."

"But," said Jane, "they have repulsed me upon this point. If my father would give me time—if two or three months were suffered to elapse—if I could see and again associate with my friend, Mrs. Amersham, I *do* think every thing would come right. But they seem to cast me off, just as my father is most urgent for a decision; and what to do I do not know."

"Do not break with your friends the Amershams," said Smylar; "I repeat they are powerful allies to fall back upon."

"Well," said Jane; "you *don't* say so, but what do you mean? If I am forced into this marriage, of what service can friends and allies be to me afterwards?"

"What, indeed!" said Smylar. "But supposing, Miss Jane, you made up your mind *not* to marry this Mr. George Grindle—would they not be serviceable and useful then?"

"But how, Smylar?" said Jane.



up my mind to disobey my father, and positively reject the offer?"

"I mean," said Smylar—"and you will forgive my constantly referring to my own case—that if the colonel—perhaps he may not—but if he persisted in this odious match—I call it odious—I would do any thing rather than submit to his tyranny."

"But what could I do?" said Jane.

"Why, Jane," said Smylar, looking at her with one of those devoted, affectionate looks, which nobody but such a person as Mrs. Smylar could have conjured up, without one spark of feeling to engender it—"why, there is a way of avoiding it."

"How?—tell me," said Jane.

"We used to act," said Smylar, "when I was the heroine at Bullock's-smithy, a farce written by one of our best modern dramatists, called 'We Fly by Night'; it was always well received, and if well acted, always went off with great *éclat*."

"Well?" said Jane, pausing for something more.

Now actors and actresses, intimately conversant as they themselves are with every thing theatrical, whether names of pieces, cant terms of the stage, or quotations from the parts which they have themselves performed, imagine a man or a woman who does not at the first hint "*take*" (as they call it) allusion to the theatre or its affairs, to be a sort of unenlightened and even unworthy member of society.

So with Smylar.

"Well," said she, "my dear Miss Jane, don't you see what I mean—'We fly by night'?"

"Indeed I do not," was Jane's answer. "I know the words are put by Shakspeare into—"

"Shakspeare!" interrupted Mrs. Smylar, "I mean to bring them nearer home—must I speak more plainly?"

"Indeed," said Miss Bruff, "you must, if you wish me plainly to understand you."

"May I trust you?" said Smylar; "—may I—I think I can—be sure that you will not communicate any thing I say to your father?"

"Smylar," said Jane, "this is the first time in my life that such a question was ever asked me. It is the first time in my life that I ever fancied it possible that I could make a confidence unknown to him, or that had for its object the concealment or withholding from him the whole truth upon any subject whatever. But as I am now placed I certainly will, and do promise you not to repeat to my father any thing you may suggest or advise."

"I am satisfied with the promise," said Smylar; "I will trust you with the design—as I know you will trust me with the execution of it. You hate this Mr. Grindle—no wonder—you know my opinion of him. I have before explained to you, as a sufferer myself, the horror and misery of marrying whom one does not—cannot—love. Well, so far you know my views and sentiments.

Your father is resolved upon this hateful match. Send him your appeal—it may make a hit, as we say. If it does, so much the better—all will be well. If it does not, act *your* part in the farce of which I have just spoken."

"How do you mean?" said Jane.

"'Fly by night,'" said Smylar. "Yes, even on the eve of the wedding, go. I will take care that all shall be managed secretly for you; go—quit the house, and let the disappointed bridal party find the bride fled, her bed unslept in, and her path unknown."

"Smylar!" said Jane, almost terrified at the proposition.

"Don't be frightened," said Smylar. "By this deciding and decisive step, that affair would be settled, and in that case you could, as I said, fall back upon your friends the Amershams; who, when they found how the matter really stood, would give you shelter and support."

"But how do you mean?" said Jane. "Leave my father's house?"

"To be sure," said Smylar, "leave any thing, every thing, rather than submit to certain misery. I told you, my dear Miss Jane to rely upon me—I can manage every thing for you. There's your own maid, she can go with you—I will settle it; but recollect this is only in case your father should attempt to drive you to desperation."

"Ah, Smylar!" said Jane, "I scarcely think any thing would induce me to take such a step as that. Besides, the escape would be temporary; of course my father would know whither I had gone, and where I was, and would fetch me back; and certainly from Mrs. Amersham's late letters I do not think they would be inclined to take part against him in this business."

"Well," said Smylar, "all I mean to say is, that you will find me ready and willing to act up to all I have promised."

"But," said Jane, "let us hope that we may not be driven to any such extremities. Let us hope that my father will be softened by the appeal I have made. If I asked any positive favour, if it was I who was anxious to marry any particular person, or indeed to be married at all, then I could imagine his unqualified refusal; but mine is the negative request, of being left alone."

"I very much doubt," said Smylar; "for though I know no more of the colonel's real views or intentions than you do, and perhaps less; still I think, from what I hear in the house as to the orders for things for the wedding-day—I do think he is resolved:—and therefore, dear Miss Jane, turn it over in your mind, and risk any thing rather than be married to *that* man."

"I wish I had never been born!" said Jane.

"Don't fret, don't fret, my dear young lady," said Smylar. "If I thought I had any influence over the colonel, you might depend upon my doing all I could; but, bless your soul, I no more dare to

talk to him about family matters, beyond the housekeeper's room and the servants' hall, than I dare fly."

" Well," said Jane, " I am so far resolved that this appeal of mine shall go to him, and then we shall see what will happen next."

Just conceive the poor dear unsuspecting girl saying "*we*"—thus connecting herself and Smylar in a conditional bond of union against her father. To what extremities must she have been driven—to what apprehensions must she have been subject! However, she fulfilled her resolution, and Smylar held the light while the anxious daughter sealed the letter to her parent, upon which letter the chances were, the said Smylar would, in the morning, be the first person consulted by him.

Nothing in the world could have turned out so unhappily as the coolness—trifling as it was, and temporary as it was likely to be—between the amiable Emma Amersham and the bewildered Jane. Jane, vexed, did not like to write again; as Emma had written last, *she* did not think it necessary to write to her. But this little misunderstanding, trifling as it was, was the cause of great danger and difficulty to Miss Brusl'; who, upon the present occasion, having dismissed her new adviser, and directed her father's servant to leave her letter upon his dressing-table, retired, if not to rest, at least to bed; but as she felt, with very little chance of sleep.

They who can read hearts and minds—few enough there be who *can*—but they who *can*, by spelling and putting-together, as the grammar school-phrase goes, may perhaps anticipate the triumphant flutter of Mrs. Smylar's heart as she glided down stairs to supper in her sanctum, after having completely "spidered her fly," if such a phrase is admissible. What her ulterior object was, it is by no means difficult to divine; but it is painful to know, that she should even thus far have succeeded with her innocent victim. She sat down with an eager appetite to her delicate banquet; and although far be it from the historian to insinuate that she had any inordinate affection for strong waters, it may be permitted to him to observe, that on this special occasion, she indulged herself with a little something comfortable, in the imbibition of which she was subsequently joined by Miss Harris, who, having seen her young lady settled for the night, roamed about the passages below, to Mrs. Smylar's door, and not being inclined to sleep, tapped at it, and was admitted.

And here went on another scene of duplicity, double dyed, conducted in the true theatrical style. With Harris, of course, Smylar was every thing kind and devoted to her young lady; and when Harris, who had never quite gotten it out of her head that Jane was desperately in love with Miles Blackmore, spoke of her low spirits, and how she went to bed crying and sobbing, Smylar "didn't wonder, poor dear—dear thing, if she *had* fallen in love; who could help it?" and so on, cunningly trusting Miss Harr-

not one inch beyond the tether in which she held her ; having perfectly satisfied herself that Jane had, as she had written to her respectable and disagreeable parent, no attachment in the world.

And while all this was transacting, as we already know, steam-boats and galloping horses were bringing Mr. George Grindle home —nay, he would be there on the morrow for aught they knew. Poor Harris, to whom her mistress's aversion to him was no secret, was really affected by her position, and was excited by two or three crocodile tears from the experienced eyes of Mrs. Smylar to such a degree, that by way of consolation and support, she fell into the insidious snares of the lady-housekeeper, and took one or two gentle sips of exceedingly weak hot brandy-and-water.

But now for the colonel. Smylar, as time wore on, and he did not return, twelve o'clock having stricken, and being rather warmed into action by "the drink," as Hamlet has it, felt somehow mightily inclined to be present when he opened the written appeal from Jane ; but then she did not know how long he might keep his servant, nor was she exactly certain in what state of mind he might be (seeing, as we know, that he *did* indulge now and then) when he came home. So she resolved to go to her bed ; and having filled the ears of Harris with praises of her young mistress, sweeter even than the nectar with which she had filled her mouth, they parted, and the house was left to the care of a footman and the colonel's man.

It was late when the master of the house returned. He had been in deep conference with Sir George. He had explained to him, that, however odd and shy Jane might appear, she was a warm, kind-hearted girl ; and that having had a *tête-à-tête* talk with her that day after dinner, he was quite sure that the match would be a happy one ; that she very much admired George ; but that, as far as he himself felt, he thought—recollecting his own career in his younger days—that George himself was scarcely earnest enough—that he took the whole matter too philosophically.

"Odds bobs ! " said the colonel ; "when I went courting, I didn't twiddle my curls, nor pull up my collar—not that in those days, curls or collars were the fashion ; but I went at it, don't you see, my dear Sir George, in what I call the slap-bang, no-nonsense-style of performance. Now, from what she said to me after dinner to-day, it strikes me that she doesn't know what he means : I feel fidgety—I don't like the niggling style—I don't believe, upon my life, that he has ever yet told her plain bolt-out, what he wants."

"Perhaps not," said Sir George ; "but you see, so much in these matters is left to be inferred."

"That'll do," said the colonel, "of course ; but what does Sterne say. ' You might as well try to make a black-pudding by talking about it, as you might try to make love ; ' and he, you know, Sir George, was a clergyman, and must have known all, how, and about it."

"Why," said Sir George, "my boy is naturally timid, and—"

"Ah," interrupted Bruff, "that's just it—'faint heart never won fair lady.' If it had been your other son, I could have understood it; "but here—in this case—eh—?"

"Well," said Sir George, "he will be in town to-morrow I hope, and we shall see. All I can say is, that if he has gained the affections of your girl, he is a deucedly lucky fellow."

"Gained!" said the colonel. "That'll do—Monday-week—settled—that's all agreed upon—so there's no fear about *that*."

And with this mutual assurance they parted. The colonel returned to his peaceful home, and went his way to his dressing-room, thence to his bed.

Jane heard him return; wakeful and restless as she was, the knock at the house-door reverberated through the stillness of the night, and struck upon her ear—ay, upon her heart. He, the sole arbiter of her fate, was come to read the appeal which she had made against his decree; then came the fear of the morning meeting, and all the severity she so much dreaded. Hope, which, as the poet says, "springs eternal in the human breast," certainly did occasionally for a few minutes cheer her; but she too well knew the firmness (as it is called in great men, and obstinacy in small ones) of her father's resolves; and it was not until daylight that she fell into a slumber, whence she was awakened by the arrival of Harris, to make arrangements for the beginning of another day.

She rose, dressed, and as usual went down to the breakfast-room, expecting to find papa waiting for her, as was generally the case; but no, he was not there. She rang the bell, the butler appeared, and announced that the colonel was gone to breakfast with Sir George Griudle, but he had left a note for Miss Bruff, which was accordingly delivered to her.

Smylar, it seems, had been up earlier than Jane. How she obtained an audience of the colonel so soon in the morning, it is impossible to surmise; but certain it is, that she read the appeal to him from his daughter, which we have already seen, and pronounced her opinion upon it, to the effect that nothing could be more absurd or ridiculous.

"If," said Mrs. Smylar, "she really did love somebody else, there might be something in it; but if her heart is disengaged, what upon earth can she do better than marry this young gentleman? When will she get a better offer—a title, as you say, colonel—a fortune. Everything suitable. What can she want? My belief from what she said last night is, that those Amershams have been setting her against this match. They are dangerous folks. I thought differently of them up to yesterday, but I am almost sure that they are the people who try to induce her to rebel; and you mark, colonel, if my words don't come low spirits, *“didn't wonder,”* said Bruff, “don't waste your breath—my mind who could help it

is made up, and that's enough. I won't see the girl—I *did* mean to breakfast at home, of course, but I won't—so, go—I shall leave a note for *her* that will finish the whole affair. You see matters as I do—go, go."

And so Smylar retired, and the colonel proceeded to write the note or letter, or whatever it may be called, which was left for Jane, and which she opened with cold and trembling hands. Thus she read:—

"It is perfectly useless for you to make any attempts to change my determination about your marriage with George Grindle. I would have told you so at once and have done with it, but you have chosen to take to writing—so have I—and now listen and ponder my words: George will be in town we expect to-morrow—you will receive him on his return as your accepted husband. The nonsense you talk about his having made you no offer, goes for nothing. He is, and as *he* knows, and as *we* know, your affianced husband; all the necessary writings are prepared, the settlements are just ready, and what I now write, *no power on earth shall induce me to recall or revoke*. On Monday-week, the 21st instant, you will and *SHALL* be married to him before ten o'clock in the morning. So let me hear no more objections, and that'll do.

"ALEXANDER BRUFF."

CHAPTER XIII.

IT must be confessed that affairs seem to be drawing towards a crisis. The abrupt cessation of personal communication between the colonel and his daughter—her unquestionable preference, as a counsellor, of Smylar to Mrs. Amersham, her once most loved friend and best adviser—and the hourly expected appearance of Mr. George Grindle—all these formed a combination of circumstances which appeared to threaten the happiness—perhaps—but let us even yet hope not—the character and respectability—of the yet innocent and amiable Jane.

The great mischief to be apprehended is most likely to accrue from the strange coldness, of which Jane could not but be sensible, in her dear friend Emma's last communication, and the pride which, even in her gentle heart, struggled against any further appeal to the feelings of her once—and so recently—most intimate and affectionate adviser.

But wherever evil threatens innocence, there comes what the chronometer-maker would call "a compensation balance." The more the power of Smylar increased, and the more patiently, placidly, and even half-consentingly, Jane listened to the sug-

gestions and insinuations of the "she serpent" (as the great American ophiologist spells it), the less she felt the possibility of executing the proposed design, arising from the estrangement from the Amershams.

If she *did* go—if on the bridal morn the nest should be found without the bird—whither was she to fly? It was wholly out of the question that without a vast deal more explanation than Jane either felt disposed to give, or, in point of fact, *could* give, of the real facts of the case, the Amershams would harbour the truant, or countenance the runaway. Thus it seems that every bane has its antidote, and that even the artful Smylar had overreached herself in what is called "setting Jane against" the only people to whose protection any thing upon earth could induce her to trust herself, supposing her driven to such a desperate measure as that of abandoning her father's house, and so achieving all that Mrs. Smylar had in view, by throwing off her allegiance, and incurring his irrevocable curse and sentence of eternal separation and abandonment—modifying only his stern decree perhaps by making such an allowance for the maintenance of his child as Mrs. Smylar under the circumstances, thought he might reasonably afford.

Has not Jane Bruff been fully described to the reader—her sweetness—her gentleness—the kindness of her heart—the purity of her mind? Yes, surely. See her then now as she *is*, on the verge of a precipice—think of her, doubting as she lies in her bed, with her head upon her once peaceful pillow—thinking of conduct which one month before she never would, never could have imagined or considered. Mrs. Smylar had friends, highly respectable, excellent people—perfect gentlefolks—who if she felt disinclined to make further appeals to the Amershams, would be too happy to give her a place of refuge from the killing effects of parental tyranny. It was not far from town that they lived—the air healthy—the place quiet—away from any high-road (not but in these days of those murderous abominations, railways, the high-roads are likely, till the madness ends, to be the most unfrequented paths)—such agreeable people—so motherly—and so exceedingly good—and so accomplished, and would be *so* charmed to be of use, &c., &c.

All this scheme, all this arrangement, suddenly impressed upon poor Jane's mind, succeeded for the moment perfectly, and the stern denial of Colonel Bruff to see her during the ensuing day, together with the certainty of George Grindle's arrival in the afternoon, had the effect of "rationalizing" (if there be such a word) an enterprise, the result of which could be nothing but what the artful Smylar intended it to be—ruin irredeemable to her master's once dear and only daughter.

It was past three o'clock when Mr. George Grindle's cab was driven by its charming master to the colonel's door. The tiger gave a thundering knock—Jane did that which certainly is not

usually done by decently bred young ladies, but for which the peculiarity and urgency of the case must excuse her—she ran to the drawing-room window to realise her worst anticipations. What was to be done? Smylar was with her—*still* with her—mark *that*—watch the constant association—the dreadfully growing influence.

"I cannot, indeed I cannot see him," said Jane.

"Then you *shall* not," said Smylar; and away she flew down the staircase, with all the display of agility and ankles which used to delight the galleries of the theatre at Bullock's-smithy, when she bounded along the oil-stained planks intended to represent the difficult paths and passes of mountains in melodramas. "Say Miss Bruff is out," were the words which in a stage-whisper she gave to the footman acting porter.

"Out?" said George; "where is she gone to, eh? Where's the colonel? I saw him just now; he said your young lady was at home."

"Miss Bruff is out, sir," said the man.

"Are you sure?" said George.

"Quite sure, sir," replied the fellow, who stood too much in awe of Smylar to attempt speaking the truth at any time.

"Well," said George Grindle, "that's very odd, indeed—rather uncommon. The colonel *said* Miss Jane was at home, and—"

"Why, sir," said the man—and it is odd enough to see how much this class of people, who would upon the slightest provocation rob a plate chest if they could get at it, or cut the throat of their master to prevent detection, dislike any kind of cross-questioning as to the *not-at-homeship* which in all good society is known to be a conventional term, and unquestionable when once adopted—except perhaps by a lover,—"I suppose, sir, my young lady knows whether she is at home or not?"

George was angry; not that *he* cared about the disappointment as regarded the *tête-à-tête*, but he disliked the too evident disinclination of Jane to the match, as a kind of wound to his personal vanity. The vanity of a professed lady-killer is something, to be sure; and away he went, his white gloves dabbling with the whiter reins of his "splendid trotter," resolved to lodge a complaint with the colonel, touching his exclusion.

Smylar, dear confederate, who knew that little more was wanting than this refusal on the part of Jane to admit the lover, to draw things to the point whereunto she wished to "screw them," was charmed with the colloquy which she took care to overhear; and when she returned to her and reported progress, the advice she gave her was to continue the course towards George which she had just adopted, and which must bring things to a crisis.

"And remember, Miss Jane," said she, "if I had not the power of being useful practically, I would not argue. I have

told you before and tell you now, you ought not to marry the man :—resist—and I again repeat that I will find you shelter and security where you may avoid the harshness and violence of your hard-hearted father."

Here we see a powerful instance of the strength of what may be called habitual influence: three months before this day the idea, not merely of disobeying her only parent, but the thought of hearing him called hard-hearted, would have been worse to her than death. Yet now she sat and listened with pleasure to her odious companion's prate, and saw in her mind's eye the beauties of the retirement which she said her proposed asylum from tyranny and oppression possessed.

Ten, twenty times a-day did Jane think of writing once more to Mrs. Amersham; but no—the earnestness, the activity, the lamp-oil, orange-peel, and saw-dust quickness of Mrs. Smylie were so much better suited to her present perilous condition, than the mild, just, moral, and proper advice of her now discarded friend, that she feared to mar the trickeries of her new prompter by asking for better counsel; and as to confiding to Emma, the twisting wriggling manœuvres of the spindle-shanked ex-heroine of Bullock's-smithy, she was quite sufficiently aware of her own degradation to feel convinced that at all hazards Mrs. Amersham would endeavour to rescue her from such a fetid influence, even to the extent of denouncing the dirty-minded hypocrite to Bruff himself.

And so sank poor Jane, unconsciously, under the abominable power of the being whom upon earth she most hated and despised.

Strange it is, but true—and how often are the strangest things the truest—that a little, inexplicable, and undefinable coldness springing up—who, except themselves, can tell exactly how?—between two old and dear friends, should have brought about this much unwished for consummation. The tenderer the friendship, the more susceptible are the friends of any little alteration of manner or spirit. The few days' cessation of correspondence between these two had given much pain to Emma; but *then* she had *her* point to carry about Mr. Miles Blackmore. Jane felt a void in her heart because she did not hear from Emma; but *then* she did not enter into the feelings, and would not take part in a cause in which she thought Jane was capricious, if not absolutely wrong. Such struggles of pride and feeling may do a world of mischief.

"Governor," said George, meeting his father at Crocky's, "I say, something's wrong at old 'That'll-do's,'—went in proper form at half-past three—nothing done—not let in—how's this?"

"Why, I suppose," said Sir George, "you wasn't expected; or, perhaps, Miss Jenny was out."

"That's a bad shot, governor," said George; "saw her pale face shining through one of the drawing-room windows, like a—"

"Never mind the simile," said the baronet; "she is the star of *your* destiny, so mind what you are about *that's* all I say. Frank's down with that old brute Leeson—I call him brute, although he *is* my brother-in-law, or at least was, so long as his sister was alive as my wife—he is out of your way, and an uncommon good job too."

"Ah!" said George, settling his collars and touching up his hair, "that's quite another affair. Old Leeson is ill—"

"No worse than he deserves to be," said Sir George; "however, Frank thinks him something, as he ought to do, if the old dunce really does what he says he will in the way of leaving him every thing—however, that is *his* affair—Miss Bruff is *yours*."

"Then," said George, "I'll trouble you so far as to get me an *entrée*. Just mention to the colonel that I was shut out to-day, and that it can be of no kind of use persevering in that manner, especially after it is understood to be an 'arrangement'."

"He is to call here in half an hour," said the baronet; "and I say, George—as to the—eh—the—no secrets between *us*—the Nelly—how did you leave her?"

"Perfectly happy," said George, "delighted with her babby and a walking-stick given to it by a new friend, to whose particular notice I have recommended her."

"What, then, you didn't hint," said Sir George, "that she had seen the last of you?"

"Hint?" said George, "*au contraire*—I am pledged, if I can, to return to celebrate the birthday of my pup on the fifth of October—ha! ha! ha!"

"Good," said the baronet; "why you would have made a capital actor, George; and was she quieted by *that*?"

"Believed it," said Mr. Grindle; "took the bait like a gudgeon: and when the pup cried as it was going to bed at night, told me I should see it in the morning—eh, governor?—there's a touch of maternity for you!"

"The young sister you say is—"

"O '*Giove Omnipolente!*' such a creature," said George; "just rising seventeen—such eyes—such teeth—such a figure! However, I have done all I could for the lot; I have recommended them to the special care of an uncommonly nice kind of a fellow, and I trust—if I am not ignorant in what I call eye-reading—that Mrs. Ellen Greenford will find a most agreeable friend in Mr. Miles Blackmore."

"Surely," said Sir George, "I have heard his name mentioned at the Bruffs'?"

"Yes," said the charming son of the worthy sire, "I think from a few words that dropped from my Jane—mark *that*, governor, *my* Jane—that he must have been a sort of half lover of hers. When he first gave me his card at Abbeville, I did not quite recollect how he was associated in my mind with Jane—however, I have recollected more about him since, and I flatter

myself if he *should* take Mistress Nelly off my hands—which if I know the world, is not quite impossible—while I secure Miss Jenny—I think we shall manage capitally—eh, governor?"

"Why," said Sir George, not looking so much delighted at the exceedingly good management of his son as he usually was, "do you know, my dear fellow, I am not by any means certain that you have exercised your ordinary judgment in this affair. Rely upon it, as we heard the name of this Mr. Blackmore at the Bruffs', Mr. Blackmore has heard *yours* at the Amershams'—the people of whom your intended is so constantly talking. It seems to me you have somewhat over-finessed yourself, by selecting him of all the birds in the air and the fishes in the sea to relieve you of your hard bargain."

"I tell you, governor," said George; "when I first saw the hit Nelly had made, I never meant him, whose name I did not then know, to know mine. Our subsequent meeting and his way of carrying on the war, rendered it impossible for me to assume an alias—especially with Nelly and the pup there. Of course, when he was so civil and all that, I did not know in the least *who* he was—*what* he was I could guess by his look and manner—all in what I call proper form, governor. I agree with you, that when I saw his card, it brought to my mind Jane's mention of him, and of his intimacy with her friends; but what could I do? And besides, if seven days are to seal my fate with the gallant colonel's daughter, as you and he say they will, what can it signify what Mr. Blackmore, or whatever his name is, can do? Nelly won't know that she is regularly cast adrift till she sees our appearance at church proclaimed in the papers; and, moreover, if she knew the truth to-day, I have such a high opinion of her sentiment and constancy, and all that sort of thing, that I am sure she would not make up her mind to a new start under a fortnight at least."

"Ah!" said the baronet, "I know you take a favourable view of her merits—however, we shall see—no harm can be done—all we must stick to is expedition—for the bubble will burst if we procrastinate—so make your game, George, and lose no time."

"Make my game, governor?" said Mr. George Grindle; "I'll make my game and play it too—only let me get at the table. If my boy is to go ninny-hammering at old Bruff's door every day, and 'not at home' is the answer to the knock, why I see no kind of fun in the business."

"That," said Sir George, "shall be settled forthwith. I know that Bruff is ready to enforce his commands if necessary."

"Enforce?" said George, looking askance at the glass over the chimneypiece—"enforce? how deucedly odd,—eh, governor? Leaving Nelly drowned in tears on one side of the Channel because I quit her, and finding Jenny suffused with a quantity of the same strange liquid because I return to her."

"I am talking on business, George," said the baronet; "this affair must be settled—tears are all mighty well, but with women mean little—they cry for grief and they cry for joy; but when I have settled the colonel as to smoothing the way (and the only difficulty I see at the moment seems to arise from some temporary squabble between him and the girl), you must follow up the matter in what I call a *slap-bang* style. The day has been fixed by *him*—to that you must stick."

"I'm prepared for the worst," said George; "some old fellow says, 'hanging and marriage go by destiny'—I should like to be put out of suspense, and turned off as soon as convenient. But are the settlements and all that satisfactory?"

"Not a word about it," said Sir George—"that it is which makes expedition most important. I had no idea that the fellow's stupidity was so extensive. I cannot enter into particulars here—but we have done him, George. His solicitor, a most gentlemanly man, seemed to hesitate about sanctioning—for advice the obstinate fellow will not take—the absurdities which he has chosen to perpetrate; all I can say is, that under existing arrangements, the girl and all her fortune, past, present, and to come, will be under your own whole and sole control."

"That'll do, as the old chap himself says," replied George; "then the innocent young thing—"

"Say nothing," answered Sir George; "the affair is settled—the longer the conclusion is delayed, the more the opportunities for consideration; so—Monday-week—mind."

"Oh, dear!" said George; "what a bore it is, if a man wants fifty or sixty thousand pounds, that he must take a young woman whom he does *not* want into the bargain. However, get me the *entrée*—don't let me be refused, and then—"

"Never mind," said Sir George; "as I told you, I expected Paternity Bruff to call for me, and I see him pounding the pavement over the way; so I will join him and bring him forthwith to a proper understanding of the terms upon which you expect to be received."

"Just the thing, governor," said George; "because for a recognised and accepted lover to be excluded from the bower of his betrothed by porters, pages, and persons of that sort, is *rather* too much."

So then parted George the first and George the second; and the reader need hardly be told how earnestly and eloquently the elder of the two pleaded the cause of the younger one. Indeed, it required no great expenditure of language to satisfy Bruff of the justice of Sir George's complaints on behalf of his son; and he announced on his own part, and in the name of his daughter, her readiness to receive Mr. George Grindle at two o'clock the next day; and, if he wished it, her equal readiness to be driven by him in his cabriolet through all those streets and generally-received places of fashionable resort, which are fashionably con-

sidered London—her exhibition in which might at once proclaim their approaching alliance.

George, who did not very highly estimate the personal attractions of Jane, would probably have demurred to this suggestion, had it not been that the season was quite suitable, in his eyes, to such a peregrination, inasmuch as everybody was out of town; while yet of the nobodies enough remained to mark and note down for the benefit of their friends in the country, a step so unequivocally decisive of the expected result.

"Let him in?" said Bruff to Sir George, "ch? who will dare to keep him out? What! do you mean to say that he called today and was not admitted?"

"That is the case," said Sir George, "as he represents it to me."

"That 'll do—that 'll do!" exclaimed the colonel; "but, my dear friend, it will never occur again—I will take care of that. You have seen my exemplary housekeeper, Mrs. Smylar—a treasure—I can entirely rely upon her. She certainly avails herself of the privilege of long and faithful service, to give me hints now and then about my family matters. I tell you, quite between ourselves, that there *are* interests at work somehow—how, I don't know—for, as you know, I know very little about anything; but all those are mere moonshine—don't you comprehend?—nothing: all shall be arranged for to-morrow—let George come in his cab—she shall take a drive with him—and then—ha! ha! ha! I think that 'll do—ch?"

"So do I, my dear colonel," said Sir George. "By Jove, after all, you military men are the best for carrying orders into effect—you are so sharp—so quick—you see every thing with an eagle's eye."

"That 'll do—ha! ha!" said Bruff. "I say, Sir George, it isn't an easy thing to deceive me—no, no; as I have said before, command is command—go and do this—that's what I say, and they do it. Why, sir, d'ye think that I was six-and-twenty years strapped up in a sash, with a white belt over my shoulders, and my chin nearly cut off with a tight leatheren stock, calling out—'Halt—left wheel—halt—front—dress,' without understanding something of discipline? I am now advanced in life and rank, but what of that?—never, so long as I live, shall I forget, sir, in private life, or in the affairs of my own family, my old 'halt—left wheel—halt—front—dress,' it is a delight to me, and I am prond of the feeling; and you, Sir George, shall find that I carry out tho principle to-morrow. White sergeants are no more to me than brown ones."

"Well, my dear colonel," said Sir George, "under these circumstances I think we may look upon the campaign as nearly closed."

"I say," said Bruff, "has he got quite clear of the other little circumstance—shaken off *that* connexion?"

"Entirely," answered the worthy baronet.

"No distress on the part of the girl?" said the colonel.

"On the contrary, I believe," said Sir George; "they had known quite enough of each other to have become worse than indifferent—that you know is universally the case with these sorts of *liaisons*."

"True, true," said Bruff; "not that I know much of such matters. What I say, Sir George, is, 'wrong never comes right, do what you will, that's my maxim. Any blockhead can club a regiment—it takes a sharp chap to make all straight again. I remember when I was on Lord Sabertash's staff, being with him when he reviewed a militia regiment in Leicestershire, and after bearing with their blunders for a couple of hours, he ordered the colonel to march them into an old gravel-pit. When they were in it, he rode up to the edge of it and said, 'There you are, my fine fellows, and there you had better stay; for by Jove you are not fit to be seen on the face of the earth.' Thinks I to myself, that'll do, and away we cantered before they could recover from their surprise."

The dialogue between the "fathers" continued just long enough to conclude by the expression of their mutual determination as to the course of proceedings to be adopted on the morrow, in the way of the projected public proclamation of the approaching union; and with the morning was to come the announcement to Jane of this great resolve. It would, indeed it must be the test; if she consented to that measure, if she yielded that point, every thing ulterior would be virtually and necessarily conceded.

The colonel, who, acting upon Mrs. Smylar's advice, had not yet "restored himself" to any personal communication with Jane, felt puzzled how to descend from the dignified position he had assumed, and permit himself to be familiar with his undutiful daughter. He could not make up his mind to convey his commands to her through Smylar, although his inclination tended that way. At length, and after much deliberation with himself, and a renewed conference with his familiar, he determined upon getting George Grindle to drive him to Harley-street, and thus accompanied, make his call on Jane, and so supported, propose the excursion to her—to which proposition the colonel would then hear no denial—perfectly sure in his own mind that the poor girl would not dare to oppose his commands before George, or to risk a scene in "company."

Thus the bluff Bruff meant to carry his point by a "*coup-de-main*"; and therefore, still maintaining his dignified silence towards Jane, he left home, having breakfasted by himself, aided only by his prime-minister, who very soon determined that, however great the success might be which she anticipated from the suddenness of his attack on his daughter, the surprise should not be quite so great as he expected.

It so happened that this very day's post brought Jane a letter from Mrs. Amersham, dated from Broadstairs, to which exceedingly pretty quiet watering-place she and her "dear good husband" had betaken themselves for a short sojourn. Jane's heart beat when she saw the well-known writing of her old and intimate friend. The sight of it brought to her recollection the various kindnesses she had received from her, and filled her mind with self-reproaches that she had ever doubted the sincerity of her affection, or questioned the truth and earnestness of her friendship. She broke open the letter, and read as follows:—

“Broadstairs,
“Thursday.

“My dear Jane,

“It seems an age since I have heard from you, and having so suddenly betaken ourselves to the sea-side, I felt apprehensive that you might write, and a consequent delay take place in the progress of your letter; which, as we hear from undoubted authority of the near approach of that ceremony at which, whenever it was to happen, I always thought I should be present, I should like, if possible, to prevent.

“You will perhaps be surprised that we should be here; but the truth is, a cousin of Mr. Amersham's, of whom I think you have heard us speak, Mrs. Hartwell, has arrived from India (where she has left her husband in a high office in the civil service), and being an invalid, and having been landed at Margate with her three dear little children (whom I almost grudge her, they are so pretty and engaging), my husband, with a cousin-like affection and regard, proposed that we should run down and settle her here, where she would rather be than in London; and so accordingly down we came, and here we are.

“I never was here before. I am delighted with the place, and more than once or twice, or three times, have wished you were with us. It is literally a little quiet nook of comfort, as calm and as retired as a country village, with a nice picturesque old pier, charming sands, a cliff quite high enough for me, houses convenient if not large, a promenade exceedingly agreeable, and a view of France, which, as far as I am concerned, is quite as near as I ever wish it to be to me: and all this so placed as to include the noise of Margate, with its arriving steam-boats, and the affected gentility of Ramsgate, within one's after-luncheon drive.

“But perhaps, Miss Jane, you will say, ‘What do you know of the near approach of my marriage, since, for some reason yet unexplained, I have not thought it worth my while to mention the day myself?’ I think my answer will startle you.

“Next door to us—for we are located in a row—I should say, the row (*par excellence*) of houses, lives—but I am afraid not likely to live long—a gentleman of the name of Leeson, of

whom I presume you must have heard, although, from what I can learn, there exists no great cordiality between him and his brother-in-law Sir George Grindle, the father of your intended. This amiable old gentleman—amiable as I hear, for I have never seen him—although, my dear Jane, I have *heard* his moans through the thin walls of these fragile tenements—is constantly nursed, watched, and guarded by a certain Mr. Francis Grindle, who will, as he says, so shortly stand in relation of brother-in-law to *our* Jane.

" My dear good-natured husband is, as you know, the most accessible and sociable of human beings, and the very first morning after our arrival here, he became acquainted with our young next-door neighbour. The moment he heard our name, he seemed too happy to snatch an hour from his dutiful and affectionate attentions to (I fear) his dying uncle, to join our little quiet circle, where he was not only within reach, but literally within call, if his services should be required by the invalid.

" And now, dearest Jane, having said this, I am going to begin one of my lectures. I am sure, my dear friend, that I have vexed you by sending you *our* united request, that you would consider well before you declared open war against your father on the subject of your proposed marriage which rebellion we—and I feel myself greatly strengthened by the *plurality*—did and do consider, knowing all the circumstances connected with that horrid housekeeper, most dangerous to your future prospects of happiness, inasmuch as your resistance would increase her influence, and produce, as *we* believe, the very result which is most to be dreaded. Now really Jane, if *we* may take Mr. Frank Grindle as a specimen of the family, we ought to redouble our entreaties and admonitions. I never met with so charming a person in my life—no, dear, not even the rejected and expelled Miles Blackmore.—Full of talent, only dimmed in its brightness by his diffidence—full of kindness and benevolence, exalted and beautified by his apparent unconsciousness of the value of the duties he assiduously performs, and the sacrifices he voluntarily and religiously makes—he seems to me to be as near perfection as humanity may be permitted to approach it.

" Of *you* he speaks in a tone which shows the depth of his feelings, the soundness of his judgment, and the generosity of his character. It is clear that you have left a deep impression on his mind; and if it were not that high principle and a sense of duty checked the impulse, I should say—upon his heart. He is, indeed, a delightful person.

" Judging then from this *échantillon* of the Grindles, I am afraid, Jane, that your hostility to his brother arises more from the compulsory part of the compact, than any personal *désagréments* in the gentleman. Is it not strange—but so is the way of the world—that we should have come here to meet and cherish

a cousin from India, and find ourselves placed next-door to the intended brother-in-law of our dear Jane. If this were put into a novel, people would call it improbable, and exclaim, ‘Oh! how likely!’ Here, however, is the fact, and I am delighted at the coincidence, as is Amersham, who takes his turn of duty with Mr. Grindle at the bed-side of poor dear Mr. Leeson every day.

“ And now, dearest Jane, comes my most serious question—at least as a secondary question—because it is personal to myself and Amersham. Do you really mean to say, that you intend to be married without inviting us to the wedding? I have told Mr. Grindle that as of course he will be present if he can be spared from his self-imposed duties here, we can make our party hence together. I confess I am not exceedingly fond of sea voyages, and in spite of the marvellous advantages which it has produced, exceedingly averse from all the operations of steam; our carriage, however, will hold us, and as I am sure you mean to invite us, all I mean to ask is, when are we likely to be expected?

“ Mr. Grindle says next Monday-week is fixed; if so, really you ought to give us a little notice. Assure yourself, my dearest Jane, even if we are—and I can hardly fancy we shall be—excluded, our hearts will be with you, and all the warmest and sincerest prayers and wishes for your happiness will attend you. But do write—do say that we—you see how pertinaciously I stick to the partnership—have not offended you.

“ Do us, moreover, the favour to remember us most kindly to the colonel, who seems—why, we know not—to have left us off latterly, much in the same way as yourself. Write by return of post. Mr. Amersham desires his kindest love; and Mr. Frank Grindle, who has just come in, begs me to send his fraternal regards. So adieu, dear, dear Jane.

“ Yours truly and affectionately,

“ EMMA AMERSHAM.”

“ P.S.—I suppose it is *now* high treason to speak of *my* poor Mr. Blackmore; but we heard from him about three or four days since in France; in which country, from what he says, Mr. Amersham thinks he means to stay for some time.”

If Jane had felt disturbed and agitated by seeing the address upon the envelope of the letter, what must have been her sensations when she had actually read its contents? the thousand points which it almost unconsciously involved—the conflicting feelings it aroused—the contending passions it excited—the thought that Francis Grindle was there, domesticated with her dearest friend—the thought that *he* was to be taken as an example—to be set up as a living reproach to her, for her dislike of, and contempt for his half-brother—the knowledge that he was devotedly fulfilling his duty to his fond uncle, the object of Sir George’s hatred and derision, and that *he—he* of all other:

in the world, was to be a witness of her ill-fated union with George, in company with the dearest friends of her heart.

Certain however it was, that this letter had a most powerful and salutary effect in recalling Jane to a sense of the affectionate conduct of the Amershams. What *had* they done cruel or oppressive in cautioning her upon the subject of rebellion against her father? Perhaps it was a most fortunate circumstance that she received it just at that particular moment when the influence of her bitterest enemy was rapidly gaining the ascendancy. She read it again, and tears again filled her eyes. Not only did she again thank Providence for what really seemed the blessing of a communication from Emma, which in the then, or rather previous state of her mind, would never have been "provoked" by any further appeal of hers; but dearly and deeply did she appreciate the combination of events which had associated her earliest friend with Frank, and evidently interested her in his favour.

Now then came the next question—should she, considering how much she had fallen—and *fallen* is the word,—into the power of Smylar—should she communicate the contents of this letter to her? Jane was almost certain, from the hints and inuendoes—to call them nothing else—of Smylar, that *she* was perfectly aware of Frank Grindle's location. Of course Colonel Bruff knew where he was—indeed, why should there be any mystery about it? And if *he* knew it, there would be little doubt but that the "*lady*" knew it also.

"Should she then tell Smylar the truth? When did Jane, before the now current week, ever ask herself such a question? Or would her admission that the Amershams were the dear friends and near neighbours of George's brother, and her father's aversion, excite some new feelings in her mind, and lead her to suppose that her unequivocally expressed dislike of the match with the elder son originated in a preference for the younger one?

She hesitated—doubted—considered. And here, reader, mark how sudden and how sad is the first inroad upon that purity of heart and thought which so unquestionably characterized poor Jane when we first met her—and how inconceivably rapid the falling off from the singlemindedness of innocence, for which she was so remarkable. Driven by circumstances into the clutches of an artful fiend in human shape, the noble-hearted, ingenuous, and affectionate Jane Bruff became all at once a double deceiver. Weaned by Smylar from the just confidence which she had for years reposed in Emma, she listens to *her* counsels; and now feeling the injustice of which she has been guilty toward those who from her youth have affectionately and disinterestedly loved her, she begins to consider it necessary to try her hand at deceiving her deceiver, and thus unconsciously play a double part; which if the be-painted and be-ringleted Mrs. Smylar had been

at the bottom of the Red Sea, nothing upon the face of the earth could have brought her—not only to do—but to think of, without dread and horror.

Of course Jane resolved to answer Emma's letter by return of post; and Jane would not have hesitated to tell Smylar that such was her determination; but with all her new attempts at dissimulation she felt that she could not mention the letter without mentioning Frank; and nobody can duly appreciate the guilty feeling with which the innocent Jane hastily snatched the letter from her table, as she heard footsteps approaching, and hid it in the mass of correspondence with which her writing-desk was amply stored.

Smylar, who forthwith stood before her, saw the trepidation and alarm by which she was agitated. Accustomed throughout a long professional life to assume the appearance of passions which she never felt, and exhibit to the public expressions of feeling by which she was never affected, she was quite certain that something more than common had agitated her young victim, and therefore resolved upon restoring her, if possible, to a state of something like tranquillity before she announced to her the probability of a visit from George Grindle at two, merely for the purpose of gathering from her answers and observations what the real state of her mind was; carefully reserving the details of the colonel's grand attack, as had been agreed upon between them.

"What time shall you order the carriage, Miss Jane?" said Smylar.

"Oh," said Jane, "I don't care. I suppose about three—that is if I go out—but while my father absents himself and denies me the comfort of associating with him, I really would rather stay at home."

"Why," said Smylar, "as to *that*, you have nothing to do but to pretend to agree to all he asks, and then—I will manage the rest."

"Can I dissemble so, Smylar?" said Jane; "or do you think it possible that I could take such a step as that to which you have hinted?"

"You had a letter from Broadstairs to-day?" said Smylar.

"Yes," answered Jane, who, at the moment she heard the words drop from Mrs. Smylar's lips, felt infinitely more deeply than ever the state of abject dependence in which she was living.

"I saw the postmark," said Smylar, "by mere accident, as was giving it to Harris. It looked like Mrs. Amersham's hand-writing. I hope it was."

"It was," said Jane.

"I am glad of that," said Smylar. "Without them we should be able to do nothing."

Jane looked at her companion with astonishment. The coo

ness of associating herself not only with her young mistress, but with her young mistress's friends, puzzled and surprised her; indeed, the effect the observation produced upon her was sufficiently strong to induce her to pause, in order to ascertain "what should follow."

"And," continued Smylar, "something *must* be done."

"But what?" said Jane.

"That's to be thought of," said Smylar. "As your friend Shakespeare says in 'Macbeth' of old beefsteak *Duncan*, as we always called him when I was in the profession—

◆
"If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly.'

You have no time to lose. *I* can tell you more than you have any notion of."

"Indeed;" said Jane.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Smylar; "and can tell it you more readily from seeing by the postmark of your friend Mrs. Amersham's letter that she and the charming, amiable Mr. Frank Grindle are at the same watering-place. Oh!" continued Smylar, who saw Jane preparing an earnest disclaimer as to any knowledge of the fact,—"I don't mean *that*; dear me, the strangest things will happen: all I mean to say, it is so. Whether Mr. Francis Grindle knows Mr. and Mrs. Amersham, is nothing to me; nor do I know anything in the world about it: all I have to remark is, that he is there attending his uncle Leeson, a most excellent man, as *I* hear, but hated by Sir George—that he is devoted to the old gentleman, and so on. Now, considering *that* to be the case, don't you think, my dear Miss Jane—the whole affair being really and truly accidental—that when the moment comes—when the fire is laid to the train—match perhaps would tell better—the circumstance that Mr. Francis Grindle is associated, or at least a resident in the same watering-place with the Amershams, will make the proposition infinitely more agreeable to you."

"Indeed, Smylar," said Jane, "I even yet do not quite understand what you really mean by what you call your proposition."

"Poor innocent!" said Smylar, looking at herself, and twisting the curls which with justice, in a mercantile point of view, she called her own. "Why, I have said to you over and over again, as plainly as I could speak, if your father forces this match upon you, *run away*. I have already proposed the scheme, but perhaps never in quite such plain words before—but there it is—do any thing rather than sacrifice yourself for ever—therefore keep in with the Amershams, for to them you must run."

"Dear Smylar," said Jane (*dear Smylar!*), "when you talked in this strain to me before, I told you that nothing could induce me to take such a step. I admit that my father's protracted

absence and continued refusal to see me make me very wretched, but still I believe that he will not practically enforce his commands when he reflects upon the misery he must inevitably entail upon me."

Now had the moment arrived for Smylar to determine upon a new and very important act of treachery and baseness—now was it for her to resolve whether she should not betray the colonel's confidence as to the surprise to be produced upon Jane's mind by his unexpected arrival with George Grindle in the cab at two, or whether she should keep that secret, and permit Jane to be overcome by the incident; or whether she should forewarn her of it and so arm her against the attack, and subsequently confide to the colonel the domestication of the Amershams in the same small watering-place with the dreaded and hated Frank; seasoning up the history, of course, with her own hints and convictions that these Amershams, to whom her great object was now to consign Jane, were all leagued in a regular conspiracy to thwart his views and wishes as regarded her marriage with George.

A few minutes' consideration, however, satisfied Mrs. Smylar that the surest possible way of carrying *her* point was to apprise Jane of her father's intentions, and so to arouse, if possible, her indignation at the despotism of which she could not but feel herself the victim.

"Don't you," said Smylar, after a pause in the dialogue, "don't you, my dear Miss Jane, be too certain that your father will *not* take some exceedingly strong measures—at all events, you should, as the poet says, 'be prepared.' I *could* tell you something which perhaps would startle you, and that involving the events of this very existing day, is—"

"If it is for my good to hear it," said Jane, "I am sure you will let me know what it is."

"Why, *then*," said Smylar, "this day is the day destined to settle your fate through life."

"To-day?" said Jane, turning pale and trembling like a leaf; "how can to-day—"

"To-day," said Smylar; "but if you betray me, Jane, never again expect the aid which I offer you in all sincerity; and which I feel imperatively bound to afford you from the recollection of the sufferings I have myself undergone for want of advice when I was your age. To-day is the day of trial; Mr. George Grindle is to be here about three with your father, and is to propose driving you in his cabriolet all round London—that is, down Regent-street, along Pall-mall and up St. James's-street, to exhibit you to the world, as it is called, as his bride elect. Now, if you permit *that*, all must follow."

The words which Smylar used upon this occasion were precisely those of the colonel when describing the effect of the drive, "As to Mrs. Smylar's notions of the importance of being driven in a cabriolet, or any other carriage, by any man in the

world, she had none ; she herself had journeyed in waggons, in omnibuses, in flys, in taxed-carts, butchers' carts, fish-carts, and indeed any sort of vehicle of which she could avail herself, driven by any sort of man ; but as in this case the colonel had fully impressed her with the definite character of the proceeding, *she*, sworn to secrecy by her confiding fool of a master, did all she could to awaken the feelings of Jane to a perfect sense of the importance of the step.

Jane looked bewildered ; the idea seemed to her to be of a nature so extraordinary, that she expressed an incredulity as to the attempt to force her into such an expedition.

"So it is to be," said Smylar, "and that was the reason, when I first came in, I inquired as to the time you would like to have the carriage ordered."

"But they cannot, will not force me," said Jane.

"You had better avoid the struggle, said Smylar ; "you know the carriage is at your service, and at your orders, and—"

"Yes," said Jane ; "but on the terms I am at present with my father, I should not like to assume the power of ordering it, and—"

"Assume ! " said Smylar ; "what have you to do with his frumpishness ? The carriage is yours and for you—he never will know that you were aware of this intended visit. Go, Miss Jane, and before you go, write to Mrs. Amersham, and tell her a little of your mind—just enough to prepare her for the possibility of your being obliged to put yourself under her protection."

"But," said Jane, "she—she is aware that this hateful ceremony is soon to be performed, and that I am about to become the wife of Mr. George Grindle."

"Ay," said Smylar, "but are *you* yourself aware of that fact ? If you stay at home to-day, and let him drive you about town in his cab, the thing is settled. But Jane, dear Miss Jane, do no such thing. I tell you the hour is at hand which decides all. I am sure I would not take the liberty of asking what Mrs. Amersham says to you, although as you have called me into council I ought, perhaps to know enough of the progress of affairs to enable me to give advice—but—"

"Oh ! " said Jane, overcome by the apparent candour and sympathy of the old doll of the puppet-show, "here—you may read what she says."

Saying which, she opened the writing-desk, which she had a few minutes before so carefully closed, and handed Mrs. Smylar the letter.

Then did Smylar satisfy herself upon a point till then entirely new to her. The expectations raised in her mind by the sight of the Broadstairs' post-mark were all realised. Not only were the Amershams at the same place as Francis Grindle, but they were associated. All this intelligence was of the greatest im-

portance to her; and such was her coolness and prudence, that although conscious of its value generally, she made no observation upon it, nor did she at the moment consider or calculate how it was to be turned to the best advantage; her dispositions would be made according to the course of events which might turn up, and to the tone which the mind of the colonel might take.

When she had read the letter, she refolded and returned it to Jane, saying only,

"Rely upon it, Miss Jane, those people are really your friends, and you ought to remain faithful to *them*. As to the ceremony which they seem so desirous to attend, that I think is not quite so likely to take place as they seem to think."

"Oh, Smylar!" said Jane, "if I could but think so too, what a load of misery would be taken off my heart."

"I have pointed out the way," said Smylar, "but now mark me—and I know the world—all depends upon your resolution to-day—do not—nay, I scarcely need say the words—do not betray me to your father—but recollect, if you accede to the proposition about the drive, all the rest must follow."

"And yet," said Jane, "I cannot muster up sufficient resolution to order the carriage and leave home."

"Then," said Smylar, "muster up sufficient resolution to refuse to leave home in Mr. Grindle's cabriolet. I tell you, the crisis is at hand—Sir George is a perfect man of the world—after to-day's drive you cannot escape—they have fashioned this deciding step into what, to an unsuspecting mind, they think will be looked upon as nothing extraordinary. I warn you of the consequences, and the question is, whether you had not better exhibit something like independence, in avoiding the trial, than remain to struggle against the commands of your father, and the persuasions of your lover."

"Lover?" said Jane.

"Well," said Smylar "Lover or not, unless you make a struggle, he will be your husband next Monday-week."

"Then," said Jane, "I am resolved—I will stay and meet the worst—force they cannot use, and if the struggle, as you call it, is to be made, it shall be made to-day. When am I to expect this *unexpected* visit?"

"Be careful, Miss Jane, be careful," said Smylar; "save *me* as well as yourself, and never for your life let the colonel know that I told you any thing of this business. Somewhere between two and three they will be here."

"Then I will see them," said Jane.

This determination was exactly the one to which Mrs. Smylar had wished to draw her victim. The simple ordering of the carriage would scarcely have amounted to a serious fault with old Bruff, satisfied as he would and must have been that Jane was in utter ignorance of the descent which was about to be made;

but her staying at home, and the resistance and refusal of the attentions of George Grindle would, as she hoped, in all probability, produce a much more violent explosion.

"Do as you please, Miss Jane," said Smylar; "all I say is, 'remember.'"

"I shall not forget," said Jane; and Mrs. Smylar departed for the present.

Jane's first proceeding was to write a warm and affectionate answer to Mrs. Amersham, in which she adopted, to a certain extent, the doubtful style as regarded the solemnization of the nuptials, but conditionally implored their attendance at the ceremony—excusing herself for not having written earlier—gave a gentle praise to Frank Grindle, and desired Mrs. Amersham to present either her compliments, or regards, or remembrances, whichever—considering their relative positions, and the relative positions in which they were so soon to stand—she might consider most fitting, suitable, and proper. Added to these, were other kind messages to Amersham himself; but of Miles Blackmore's name, destination, or proceedings, Jane made no mention whatever, although she certainly *did* feel more about him than she ever would admit—not in the way which Mrs. Amersham always suspected—but as a superior person whom she admired, esteemed, and neglected, and one whom she almost wished she *could* have loved, as her dearest friend believed she *did*.

Having finished her letter, and affected to eat a luncheon, and dissipated it in a glass of sherry, under the advice of Smylar, who told her that even two would do her no harm, considering what she had to undergo, and waited—one can scarcely say patiently, but rather impatiently (for any thing is better than suspense), the arrival of the pretender to her hand, every pair of wheels that rattled along the street seemed to announce his approach—any common ringing at the door made her start. However, half-past two had been chimed—three o'clock had been stricken—and so went the time until four, but neither did Mr. George Grindle nor Colonel Bruff make their appearance; no cabriolet was whirled up to the door, and at half-past five Jane gave up the hope or rather dread of seeing him, and proceeded to her dressing-room; Harris, her maid, informing her that Mrs. Smylar, for whom she inquired, had been gone out for nearly an hour.

It is odd enough, but it is true, that Jane felt disappointed at not having the interview over; she had wound herself up for the act; there had been a strain as it were upon her energies, and when she sat down on her sofa she burst into a flood of tears.

CHAPTER XIV.

"He was the kindest—the only real friend I ever had," said Francis Grindle to Amersham, as he shut the door of the room in which he had closed the eyes of his affectionate and devoted uncle.

Francis was so deeply affected—so deeply, that Amersham had great difficulty in getting him away from the chamber of death to the adjoining house, which, charmed as they were with the kindness of his manners, and the sweetness of his disposition, they entreated him to consider as his present home.

The worthy and respectable Mr. Leeson was dead; he gently breathed his last on the evening of the day upon which Emma had written to Jane, but after the letter had been posted. Frank's announcement of the event, transmitted express to Canterbury, reached town in time to acquaint his father and brother of the event; which announcement prevented, for decency's sake, rather than as any matter of feeling, the projected visit of Mr. George to Miss Jane Bruff, and their subsequent deciding drive.

It is in the day of sorrow and the hour of grief that the congeniality of minds chiefly develops itself. We have only seen in Mrs. Amersham and her correspondence, an amiability of character and playfulness of disposition, calculated to insure her popularity with the world generally, and secure for her the affections of her more intimate acquaintance; but Emma was capable of greater acts of kindness than those which shone superficially in society. At the bedside of the sick she was to be found a constant and sedulous attendant; no offices, however painful and irksome, would that amiable woman decline, when the performance of them tended really to benefit those over whom, like a ministering angel, she watched.

From the moment that this excellent creature was made aware of the actual state of poor Mr. Leeson's health, her whole time was devoted to anticipating his wishes in all those fancies in which the sick and dying indulge—some trifling change of food—something to tempt the appetite which the physicians wished to be gratified, but which hour by hour grew weaker. Had she been Leeson's daughter, or Frank Grindle's sister, she could not have taken a deeper or more earnest interest in the sufferer's fate.

This is true nobleness of heart—this is puregenuine philanthropy. All the mawkish doubts as to what a lady ought to do, or ought not to do, were of no avail in the mind of the generous Emma; she tended and nursed their venerable neighbour with solicitude. There was a tie to bind her to him, and that was his connexion with her darling Jane's intended husband;—but, truth to say, the more she saw of Frank, the more she understood his character, and the more she heard of the circumstances in which he was placed,

the more she exerted herself in her attentions to Leeson, and the better she comprehended, *that* which she had scarcely before understood to exist—the preference of her friend for his amiable and accomplished nephew.

"What," said Frank, "was the original cause of disagreement and estrangement between my father and my poor uncle, I never could ascertain. Whatever it was, it existed long before my recollection; and the way in which I have been treated by my father, rendered any hope, even had I wished it, of a confidence on his part most improbable; while my poor uncle, whenever I endeavoured to ascertain the nature of their difference, always evaded my questions, and even wished me to believe, that although they did not meet, they were still on friendly terms. Ah! my poor uncle was a man who had no prejudices—no animosities—but he is gone, and I am—as I said when I closed the eyes which for years have beamed upon me with kindness, and benignity, and affection—I am alone in the world."

"My dear friend," said Amersham, "you must not give way to these feelings. To attempt to stop the current of grief which such a deprivation as the loss of your excellent uncle must be to you, would be vain. Indulge in that generous and affectionate sorrow of which a heart like yours must be full; but grieve not without hope and confidence, and believe, as far as worldly matters are concerned, you neither are, nor are likely to be 'alone' or friendless—your fortune—"

"Ah!" said Frank, "there it is, Mr Amersham—it is *that* which pains me the most. My poor dear uncle's last words, as you heard them, referred to his will—it is at his lawyer's in Lincoln's-inn. What am I—what ought I to do? it may contain some directions as to his funeral. Oh! is it come to *this*, my dear uncle? am I talking of the funeral of the kindest relation I ever possessed? It must be so—these, I know, are events inevitable, but—I cannot—no—I should myself die before I could summon resolution to write to these solicitors upon such a subject—mixing so soon after the transition of that blessed spirit to another and a better world, the common concerns of our lives, with the feelings which now occupy my whole mind."

Amersham, who, as well as his charming wife, sympathized most cordially with poor Frank, felt it necessary—not of course being unnerved by the event which had prostrated the spirit of their young friend—to urge him to action, to point out the absolute necessity of sending to the solicitors, and begging one of the firm to come down with the will, which he believed to have been lodged in their possession. He eventually succeeded—not in inducing Frank to write, but in getting him to permit *him* to write to the lawyers; nor would Amersham have carried even that point, so sacrilegious did Frank consider the act, had not Mrs. Amersham pressed upon him the probable fact to which he had himself previously alluded—that some desire might be expressed in the will."

which it would be his duty, as well as his inclination to comply with.

It was certainly somewhat unpropitious to the fate of George Grindle, that Jane's dearest friends should have become, just at this particular point of her history, intimately acquainted with his younger brother, and acquainted with him under the peculiar circumstance of his uncle's illness and death—a combination of events which served to increase his claims to attention and regard. However, when Bruff had given the word of command, and Sir George had hoisted the signal of distress, nothing one can anticipate within the range of probability, or we might almost say, possibility, seems likely to occur, finally to change Jane Bruff's destiny, although the present event might perhaps delay its consummation.

Many people may, and perhaps will think, whatever Bruff's anxieties about the baronetcy *might* be, that if it could be shown to him that the alternative between his daughter's marrying the one son or the other of Sir George Grindle, was her happiness or misery, no man could be so obstinate and obdurate, considering how slight the difference between their fortunes apparently was, would hesitate which course to pursue. But the reader should understand, that with all Bruff's abruptness, bearishness (or, as those who liked him least, called his brutality), even if he *had* lent himself to this transfer—not of affections, but of husbands—Sir George, on the other side, would have set his face decidedly against the exchange.

One of the subjects of irritation on the part of the baronet against Frank was, the annoying consciousness of his future independence of *him*, and of his estates. George was mixed up in all his affairs—George's consent was essential in all questions of entailed property—George's involvements, and those of his father were, in fact, family matters with which Frank, with his younger brother's small allowance, had nothing whatever to do. If Frank married Jane under his circumstances, Sir George would benefit nothing; it was by the accession of fortune to his heir that he was to be released; and therefore giving Bruff credit for the most disagreeable and repulsive qualities with which a great big "soldier officer" ever was blessed, we ought to do him so much justice as to admit, that if any question had arisen, or should arise, as to the alteration of what surgeons professionally call "the first intention," the baronet would have out-heroded the colonel in favour of the only son about whom he was interested in the slightest degree. Naturally, or rather unnaturally, Sir George disliked his second boy, and the fact of his prospective independence increased the dislike to hatred.

"So," said Smylar to Bruff, "that was the reason of your not bringing the lover—to be sure, it would have been downright indecent, considering the death of so near a relative."

"True," said Bruff: "but what business had that Mr. Lee-

son to die this week—this particular week—just on the edge of a conclusion—all settled, and now I suppose the whole affair must be postponed for a fortnight or three weeks."

"At least a month *I* should say," replied Smylar; "a week will of course elapse, or something near it, before the funeral, and then the respect for the memory of the deceased—"

"That'll do—that'll do," interrupted the colonel; "in that respect, as a joker would say, I think we need care but little. However, as you say, and as Lady Gramm says, and she is tip-top authority, we must not travel too hastily; besides, it might set Jane more against the young man than she is already, if the—what is that thing you were telling me of last night—the baked mutton—what—"

"The funeral baked meats!" said Smylar. "I quoted Shakespeare—"

"Ah! that'll do," said the colonel; "I didn't recollect the name, but what I meant was, we mustn't march double quick time after this uncle is buried; and my difficulty is, Smylar, that as Jane and I are two, as they say, and I will not be the dupe of her pretences, my difficulty is, not knowing exactly what to do with her during the interval between this and her marriage. As for Lady Gramm as a companion, why, to say the truth, I think she rather turns up her nose at the Grindles; and her toady—her shadow, the poem writer, Miss Pheezle—she'll set her all wrong with—with—what do they call that which people in love are supposed to be full of?"

"Do you mean sentiment, colonel?" said Mrs. Smylar.

"That'll do," said the colonel, "sentiment—yes—that's it—my poor wife was sentimental; she never could make me comprehend what it was or is; but I don't think it a good plan to leave her here in the hands of those people."

"Will you be advised by *me*, colonel?" said Mrs. Smylar.

"Why—eh?" said Bruff, "I think I generally am, and I don't know that I could do better."

"Well then," said Smylar—"only do not betray me to Jane—let her go for a week or a fortnight on a visit to her dear friends the Amershams. I can tell you this, and I tell it you as I tell you everything, in perfect truth and sincerity, that there are no people so anxious for her marrying Sir George's son as they—nay, only don't be angry—all I do, Heaven knows," and hereabouts up went the expressive eyes, so infallibly effective at Bullock's-smithy, "I do for your good, and for that of the dear child—she has told me this fact—and even shown me letters from Mrs. Amersham, pressing upon her the importance of obeying your wishes in this matter."

"Why," said the colonel, "I thought you told me quite the contrary."

"So I did," said Smylar; "but it was before certain things came to my knowledge. Thoughts are thoughts—fancies are fancies—

but when one sees a thing written down in black and white, it is beyond a doubt—I know the truth and justice of what I am now saying."

The axiom is somewhat musty, which proclaims the absolute and essential necessity of remarkably retentive memories to persons possessing highly imaginative powers; and certainly in any other establishment, the fact that Mrs. Smylar had argued and advised in three different and distinct ways, touching the Amershams and their views and intentions, within the last five or six days, must have had its effect: but not in that in which she fluttered and flourished were these discrepancies and contradictions in the slightest degree important; in the great, thick, buzmuz head of Colonel Bruff, everything was confusion and mist—there was an incapacity first of comprehension and next of retention—it was as if his skull had been made of putty—he took an impression easily, but when a new one was made, it had the effect of driving out the one which had been made before. Smylar, who could fence, and shift her ground, and hit here, and touch there, always found quite sufficient reason for the opinions she gave, or the advice she proffered; and if by any inconceivable chance, the big soldier-officer did recollect enough—as it seems he did upon the present occasion—and think she had spoken *per contra* before, she was always sure to bring herself right, by a display of her anxiety and interest, and a detail of her further intelligence and information.

Now, the reader may here be so far let into the secret of Mrs. Smylar's policy—the object of which must perhaps by this time have become too clear and evident to be any secret at all—as to be told that although she knew that Mr. Frank Grindle was associated and even domesticated with the Amershams at Broadstairs, it did not form any part of her scheme to let her gallant and disagreeable master^{into} into that secret. The colonel knew that Frank was at Broadstairs, and that Frank's uncle, Mr. Leeson, had died there, and that the remains of that respected gentleman were to be removed for interment first to London, and then to the church of his own parish in Hertfordshire; but he did *not* know of intimacy which had sprung up between Frank and the Amers^{hams}, nor did he even know that the Amershams *were* at Broadst^{air}s as how should he?—unless enlightened by the person who th^t it more beneficial to keep him in the dark.

Bruff had estranged himself from his daughter. ¹ ~~lk~~ never corresponded with his family; the letter which he had spatched to his father on the death of his uncle, merely contained a plain, and what might be called an official detail of that melancholy event. He did not know that the Amershams were actually on their road from the sea-side towards their own house, nor did he even surmise that they had obtained a promise from Frank to pass with them a few days under their hospitable roof, after the funeral was over. This intelligence, which Smylar had obtained from Jane,

was the mainspring of her actions ; if she could keep this secret, and yet persuade the colonel to permit Jane to go for a few days on a visit to the same family, she flattered herself it would be a great *coup*.

Sir George, whose feelings were unequivocal towards his departed brother-in-law, felt—(felt, except indeed as it concerned himself, is perhaps too strong a word) that he could not well remain in town, and decline to pay the last mournful duties to his departed connexion ; and George, who found from certain hints of the colonel's, that Jane's delicacy would be wounded by any attempts of his in the way of visits at this particular period, resolved, in order to get rid of the difficulty, and in fact, of an association with Frank, to leave London quietly for a week—with the understanding that the *aspirant* might be permitted to write to his fair intended, and in the hope that she would reply to his letters.

The combination of affairs was just now becoming as intricate as it was delicate ; Smylar was actively alive, and vigorously indefatigable in taking her measures ; but one word—one whisper might in a moment destroy the whole fabric of her air-built castle, and ruin her for ever in her master's opinion. If Colonel Bruff did not see Jane, Jane would not accept any invitation from the Amershams ; for to her it would have seemed an almost treasonable disobedience to leave home without the farewell kiss and blessing—however ungraciously bestowed — of her father. If they met, Smylar knew enough of Jane to feel sure that she would not go to the Amershams without letting him know that her future brother-in-law was expected there as a visitor. This was a dilemma out of which she—even she—did not clearly see her way.

Upon mature consideration she thought that the best, indeed the only plan, would be to bring about a reconciliation, and an interview between Jane and her father, having previously lectured the young lady into the commission of so much disobedience—merely negative as she proposed to prove to her—as would be involved in her not telling papa who was expected at the Amershams. This was no falsehood—she certainly knew a fact—but she was in no way bound to impart it. If the colonel had suspected or imagined such a thing, and had asked her about it, the affair would have been wholly different ; but no—Mrs. Smylar having given him the idea of letting her go to the Amershams, where according to her representation of their feelings, he felt satisfied she would be safer than any where else, he, old Buz-muz (as his servants called him) never would think it necessary to inquire who the others of the party were likely to be, and certainly least of all, without a much greater degree of enlightenment than he was destined to receive from Smylar, was he likely to ask a leading question touching Mr. Francis Grindle.

Smylar was early at work, and having succeeded in soothing the

colonel, her next business was to—what she called “tutor” his daughter; and really one cannot be very much surprised, that when a girl so treated and so situated as Jane Bruff was, heard Smylar’s most plausible doctrines as to the not being obliged to tell more than one is asked, and as to the pleasure and comfort she would enjoy with her friends the Amershams, strongly contrasted with the wretchedness and sorrow she must inevitably suffer in London during the next fortnight; and without even glancing at the gratification she might feel in the society of Mr. Francis Grindle, her future brother-in-law; merely remarking, that if she did consider it necessarily dutiful to mention to her papa the fact that he would be included in the family circle there, she would by making the communication, decidedly and unquestionably provoke his absolute refusal to her going; considering all these things, one cannot be surprised at her falling into the snares of the tempter and deceiver.

Besides, she felt that she had wronged her dear friend Emma—she felt anxious again to see her—to be domesticated with her—in fact, to convince her that whatever might have been the circumstances or impressions under which she had felt some kind of temporary distrust, they were all gone, vanished, and buried in oblivion. And so, having prepared the parties for a meeting, Mrs. Smylar entered Miss Jane Bruff’s boudoir, and announced to her that her papa wished to see her in the library—the back parlour being so called, from having two hanging shelves against the wall half filled with old army-lists, the court-guide, the calendars, and some eight or ten odd volumes of else forgotten old magazines.

“Now, Miss Jane,” said Smylar, as she was ushering her down the stairs, “mind—not a word about Mr. Frank—you will be shut up here in this dark, dusty hole of a house if you do.”

“But if my father asks,” said Jane, “what company they have staying in the house—”

“Say you don’t know,” said Smylar.

“But how can I say so when I *do* know?” said Jane.

“You *don’t* know what company they *have* now,” said Smylar; “Mr. Frank doesn’t go there till the day after tomorrow.”

“Ah! well,” said Jane Bruff, and the next moment she stood in her father’s presence—ran towards him, and throwing her arms about his neck, kissed his cheek, and moistened it with her tears.

“That’ll do—that’ll do,” said Bruff, pushing her not too gently from him. “Well—there—sit down—all this has happened very unluckily, this death in the family—I hate postponements—they don’t look prosperous—but still decency must be observed—and so—as I have heard that your friends the Amershams wish you to go to them for a few days—why—upon consideration, I think it

best you should—it's all very painful—but Sir George and your intended have left town—you will hear from George no doubt—he was coming here—I desired Smylar to tell you the reason he didn't—all bad—however, only a short delay—so—if you like—the carriage and horses are at your service—when should you like to go?"

"To-morrow, if you please," said Jane.

"That'll do," said the colonel; "but listen to me—hear what I have to say. I have great reliance upon the good sense and good heart of Mrs. Amersham—don't think quite so much of him—but now—although I think I can rely upon your obedience to my will and wishes—and, moreover, if necessary, I will enforce it—from what I hear, Mrs. Amersham is all in favour of your marriage with young Grindle—now, what I have to desire of you is, that you will attend reasonably to what she says—she knows the world, and must see what an advantageous match it is for you—so, as you value my affection, attend to her advice."

"My inclination as well as my duty," said Jane, "will induce me to comply with your wishes."

"Have they got a large party with them?" said Bruff.

Here, in spite of the lessons of Smylar, who was in the lobby, with her ear at the keyhole, poor Jane could not control a sort of tumultuousness, which the colonel seemed to remark.

"No dandies—no fine gentlemen with more brass than gold?"

"Not that I know of," said Jane.

"And that Mr. Miles Blackmore," said the colonel, "is he there—he has been in France—is he come back?"

"I know he is *not*," said Jane Bruff; "but, my dear father, what *is* he to me, even if he were?"

"I don't know," said the colonel, who seemed rather excited; "but I know he is a great friend of the Amershams, or Mrs. Amersham—or of somebody belonging to the family. I knew something of his father—about, as great a puppy as ever swaggered—every dog has his day—and he had his—but it was only when George Grindle and I were talking about him, and that I traced the relationship to my old aversion."

"I know, sir," said Jane; "that Mr. Blackmore is not in England, because it so happens that Emma mentioned in one of her latest letters to me, that he was in France."

"That'll do—that'll do," said Bruff. "I have no more to say. You are now engaged—engaged; and though George and his father have thought it right to go out of the way rather than go to this old Leeson's funeral, you will receive and answer whatever letters George writes to you; and, under the circumstances, I don't think you can be placed in better hands than in those of your friend Emma; so to-morrow you may depart. Give my compliments to them—of course you will wish them to be at the wedding?"

"Indeed yes," said Jane, "and I thank you sincerely, my dear father, for affording me the opportunity of inviting them."

"Pshaw, child, pshaw," said the colonel, "be reasonable, be tractable, do as I order you, and we never shall quarrel. I hope and trust that the line of conduct I have felt myself bound to adopt towards you during the last few days will convince you, Jane, that I am not to be trifled with."

And so, with another filial kiss, and another paternal "that do," Jane and her father parted, much to the satisfaction of Smylar, who now flattered herself that with ordinary luck she should reap the full benefit of her long continued machinations.

The generous Mr. Leeson had fulfilled all his promises made during his lifetime to Frank. His Hertfordshire estates, besides some little property in Sussex, he had bequeathed to his amiable nephew, and somewhere about forty thousand pounds in the funds, besides a considerable quantity of personal property. The acquirement of these only served to make him more hateful to George and his father, who when they ascertained that all his expectations had been realized, were not only base enough to be envious of his prosperity, but mean enough to regret the course they had previously pursued towards him; being however too cunning not to be certain that any immediate change in their manner, or any attempted advances towards his affections or friendship, would be easily seen through and appreciated by the young successor to his uncle's wealth. Of him we shall probably hear more presently; at this moment we must call the reader's attention to a less agreeable subject.

Charming, pure, unsophisticated, and generous as Jane was when so short a time since we first knew her, it is impossible to shut our eyes to the progressive mischief which Smylar's too surely increasing influence over her young mistress is working. The worst of falsehoods is, to high minds, the *suppressio veri*; or rather, in plain English, the negative falsehood of equivocation. Of this the ingenuous Jane Bruff had, upon the occasion of her interview with her father, just related, been guilty in its degree; and the close reasoner, or the severe scrutineer, will scarcely consider it as secondary. She knew that Francis Grindle was, or would be at the Amershams, while she was on her visit to them. Smylar had provided her with the evasion as to his not *being* actually at the house *then*. She knew that Miles Blackmore, for whom we know she was not in the slightest degree interested, beyond the ordinary sentiment or feelings of friendship, would *not* be there. Her father, never imagining or suspecting even the probability of her meeting Frank during her absence, presses upon her the question referring to the chance of her association with Blackmore, about whose flirtation with her he had heard something, and against whom, arising out of some recollections unfavourable to his father, he had conceived and still entertained a prejudice.

In this state of affairs, six months before, Jane would have told

her father, not only whom she did not expect to meet, but whom she did. She knew in her own heart and mind that Frank Grindle was by ten thousand degrees a more dangerous rival to his half-brother than Miles Blackmore, or any body else she had ever seen. His name was never whispered to the parental Bruff as a probable visitor at the Amershams'. This was the *suppressio veri* of which Jane Bruff, before she had been driven into the care of Smylar, would never have been guilty.

But mark the assiduousness of the fiend's insidiousness. The information the reader has just received as to the disposition of Mr. Liceson's property, was derived by Smylar from the colonel, accompanied and illustrated by a few of those expletives with which he was accustomed to decorate, adorn, and illuminate his more animated details; and it was instantly carried to Jane with a suggestion, too plausible and even too just to be denied, that as the younger brother's unencumbered fortune was considerably larger than the elder brother's, no question could exist, when the preference on her part was so decided, as to which of the brothers she should marry.

To a mind like Jane's, wholly unused to such sudden reverses and agitations as hers had within the last few days been subjected to, all the turmoil, the anxiety, the necessity for saying *this* while meaning something else, and the importance of doing *that* which it was essential to make her father believe never had entered her head, was bewildering; and without reference to any ulterior object, the prospect of once again reposing under the roof of the Amershams, although but for a short period, was something delightful.

Little did she, poor girl, think why she was permitted so great an indulgence—nor even yet calculate the policy of *her* under whose influence she obtained it. To her the permission to accept Emma's invitation was in itself delightful—it indicated at once the postponement of the ceremony—the certainty of being again domesticated with her best friends—the equal certainty of an evasion of the infliction of the visits of George and his father, and of a relief from the solitude of a London house, varied only by the scoldings of the colonel, or the tawdry absurdities of Lady Gramm and Miss Pheezle; and so she took "the goods the gods provided," without making any reflection, except upon the wonderful kindness of papa.

However, in blessed ignorance of the causes which produced to *her* such agreeable effects, Jane took her departure the following day, drawn by the venerable Sugar and Salt, driven by the eighteen-stone coachman, and attended by Harris, her maid, and William Simmons, her footman.

* * * * *

"Governor," said George to his respectable parent as they were dissipating in seclusion at Brighton, to which they had retired on

the occasion of the funeral, at which they resolved not to be present, "this pitch over of old Leeson's is a black job for us—how long will it put us out?"

"Why," said the worthy baronet, "I don't know, George. The fashionable rules about decency are now vastly elastic—su^to all cases. I don't see, considering we never cared for the and he evidently never cared for us—I should say putting another week would do."

"Splendidly!" said George; "only, what is the stuff about n^tmourning at weddings? What! leave it off for the day and on with it again in the morning?"

"As far as I am personally concerned," said the baronet, "that difficulty is easily mastered, for I mean to wear none. What the deuce have I to do with him? I married his sister, and she died. When we were married she hadn't tenpence-halfpenny in the world. 'Her face was her fortune.' What then? I hated his relations! and this Leeson used to bore my life out about all sorts of matters with which I had no concern—in which I took no interest, and about which I knew nothing—and so, to use a conventional phrase, George, I cut him."

"I see," said George; "you cut, and *he* didn't come again."

"You've hit it," answered the father; "he was proud but poor. By some bedevilment, as the Duchess of Daventry says, one of his schemes turned out well, and he became, in course of time, exceedingly rich—and then—"

"Ah," said George, "then, governor, I suppose, *you* tried come again, and *he* cut."

"I was civil to him," said the baronet, "asked him to my house—but no—he would stand aloof. He always expressed his partiality for that stupid, heavy nephew of his, and now—"

"Ah, that's it, governor, said George. "Now our friend Spooney makes the shine out of us. I don't suppose that fellow Frank owes five hundred pounds on the face of the earth. There's a pretty go. Why, governor, taking our encumbrances into what my friend Frank Poggle used to call the 'cackle actions,' he'll beat us to sticks."

"Ah," said Sir George, "but then with the title, and this girl under your lee—why, with her money and common prudence you can nurse and get round."

"So, perhaps will she," said George, "and then you know it will all come to the same in the end."

"Not a bit of it," said the baronet; "'sufficient to the day is the evil thereof,' says the best book in the world."

"Ah!" said George; "governor, you are like the other old gentleman I have heard of—you can go a long way for quotations to serve your own turn."

"Thank you, master George," said the baronet; "not that exactly; all I mean to say is, if as you get old you find yourself going down the hill, put on the drag to save yourself; and you children will save themselves afterwards."

In this state of affairs, six months ~~years~~, ——

"Thank you, good sir, I owe you ten," said George. "No theory is good, as Frank would tell us, that won't stand the test of practice. I begin to feel how much I am obliged to you, governor, for giving me this bit of advice—seeing, as it seems to me, that you have acted upon it yourself. Ha! ha! governor, I've done you now—a regular catch out, governor."

"Not a bit of it," said Sir George. "No, I think as far as our relative ages have permitted us to live together as men—and men of the world—there never were a father and son more *d'accord* than we. We quarrel about nothing, George."

"Strong reason for *that*, governor," said George; "we have deuced little to quarrel about. However, the sooner we get out of the scrape, the better; because besides all the stumpy-ups in the way of annuities and insurances, the little woman in France will be soon looking for something to keep matters going—*'Quelque chose pour faire le potage'*, as my friend Tim Huggins says. Now the announcement of this 'union,' as they call it, with Miss Bruff, would have settled and stopped all that."

"Ah, but this death," said the baronet, "to be sure—yes, and just as that drive would have settled the thing."

"I was rather glad that the drive tumbled through," said George. "You see the girl is what I call a regular dowdy. Her bonnets are below contempt. As to sitting at her ease in a cab, she can have no notion of it. She would keep putting her hands over the apron, as a rabbit pats with his paws over the front of his hutch."

"Come, come," said Sir George; "there is a proverb which enjoins a man to speak well of the bridge that carries him over. Don't you think you ought to keep that in view?"

"I hope, governor," said George, "my little bridge, as you call her, mayn't some of these days bring me into the Court of Arches."

"And afterwards into the House of Piers, I suppose," continued the vivacious baronet, resolved to rival his son even as a punster. "No, no, rely upon it she is a good girl, with odd notions—as all good girls have. To be sure, this delay is the greatest imaginable bore, and for more reasons than you can have assigned; but so it is with me—every *coup* of my life has *manqué'd*, by some absurd and unlooked for accident or incident."

"I suppose," said George, "Master Frank will do fine after this—cut us, perhaps, and take a fresh start."

"Not he," said the worthy baronet; "it isn't in him. He hasn't the spirit to take his place in society where he ought certainly now to assume it. Dried fishes—bits of earth—twisted shells—fossil pigs, which in other days had six or eight legs—mammoths' toes, or the things he calls the hichthysorchorses, or something of that kind, which he would, if one would let him, prove beyond any doubt lived and flourished long before this world was made, and were sent here from some other, to astonish the

natives, Adam and Eve, as curiosities. Upon these things, and the people who write about them, lecture about them, and, as I believe, make them, he will spend all his money."

"It's wonderful, governor," said George, "how these lecturing chaps—who are called men of science—get on."

"Ah, George," said the baronet, "you and I have our opinions upon such points, and I believe I lost myself several degrees in Miss Jenny's favour by expressing them. However, I do think if we managed matters well, we might somehow contrive to bring Frank forward a bit—I mean after the dew of grief has dried off his glassy eyes, we might get him to—to—"

"Fork out, d'ye mean, governor?" said George.

"My idea," said the baronet; "but, as the man in the play says, 'infinitely better expressed.' You see, the more one thinks of things, especially family matters, why the more we are inclined to meet and to conciliate. Now that the bore Leeson is dead, we might, I think, get round—"

"I doubt it, governor," said George. "After our retreat from the funeral, I think we are done."

"What!" said the baronet; "d'ye think that we should have swallowed all past grievances and gone the whole hog at once?"

"Why," said George, twisting his curls through his fingers and affecting to look shy, "if you mean by going the whole hog that we ought to have followed the old bore, as you call him, to the grave—that I should think would perhaps have been the thing to have done."

"Then, do you fancy that I have acted rashly, George?" asked the parent.

"Not rashly," answered the son, "but what I call rather too naturally. Of course as people live now, at least in our circle, a father naturally hates his son, because he feels obliged to do something for him to keep him up in the world; and the son naturally hates his father, because by living he keeps him out of a deuced sight more. But I think making all due allowance for your uncommon dislike of Frank, in which I both filially and fraternally participate, it would have been more prudent, knowing what he expected from your departed brother-in-law, to have kept in with him a little more than we did. But there it is, governor,—neither you nor I can sham. We can't act parts—ingenuousness is our great failing;—and I don't care—I would rather be sincere and unpopular, than the most successful hypocrite that ever made his game."

"*Tel père, tel fils,*" said the baronet. "Gad, George, you are a regular chip of the old block: and even now, knowing as we do, at least by all accounts, that Frank is, to use a city phrase, as good a man as you, if not a better, I don't think I could appear civil to him, although he *is* my son. Affectionate I never could be."

"Well," said George, "there I differ entirely with you, governor. As for affection, I can't pretend to say much about it; but as to bivity, and what I should consider half-brotherly friendship, I am quite prepared, if he is prepared to receive it, to offer him all that kind of notice and attention."

"I'm sorry now," said Sir George, after some minute or two's reflection, "I am sorry now that we did not go to the funeral. What would it have signified? True, I quarrelled with the man when he was alive; but one wars not with the dead. I'm vexed—I really am."

"Couldn't we write to say we would go now," said George; "just say that we have managed to get off an engagement?"

"No, no," replied the baronet, "it is too late now—we have taken our line, and must maintain it."

This private dialogue between Sir George and his son, although full of platitudes and common-places as the best drawing-room conversation in London—is useful in the course of our narrative, as exemplifying, when all the world is shut out, the general character of the sire and son, as well as the self-conviction of either or both, that they were two of the most amiable, straightforward, ingenuous, candid, and honourable persons breathing. This is precisely what every man—ay, and every woman—in this world feels; they commit crimes, but then they have such a multitude of excuses and qualifications for what they have done, that the crimes become in their own minds—and that seriously and conscientiously too—not only no crimes at all, but rather actions the result of oppressions, of cruelty, neglect, or some such sort of thing.

A man carries off his friend's wife—all the world cry out, especially the women. Trace that defection, during the whole progress of the estrangement of the wife from the husband—you will find that both parties are so blind to the real state of their case, that neither of them thinks of crime. Either of them would argue, if such affairs admitted of confidence, upon the purity and genuineness of their affections; and so to them they *are* pure and genuine, while passion hoodwinks the mind, and absorbs all feelings but the one; nor ever did there occur a case of the nature to which we now refer, in which the woman, under the same delusion, did not make herself believe that somehow she was justified by her husband's conduct in the sin of abandoning him.

Scarcely any man (and still more rarely any woman), is professedly and avowedly, even to himself, wicked. In early youth, when young gentlemen consider profligacy a feather in their caps, they talk much of proceedings in which they take a much smaller share than they would have it understood they do; they like the credit of dissipation, and so to maintain their characters, actually give in to it to a certain extent. This is vanity, coxcombry, or what you please—but it is not wickedness. They advance in life, and fall into all the allurements and entranglements incidental to

the present state of society. They are led on to do—what to the calm, contemplating spectator, are things wrong and unjustifiable; but as in the case we have before noticed, they are the unconscious actors in those scenes, and sink under an influence perhaps only equally and mutually with some other infatuated person.

Now, what was the case with George Grindle? What was the history of Ellen? How was *that*? When we have heard him proclaim himself as unable to act a part or a hypocrite, to what extent in that very instance had he lied, and justified himself?

There he was, beloved by a charming girl with whom he had been for years domesticated—she, devoted to him, and the mother of his child. How did this connexion begin? It was clear that Ellen was satisfied that she herself was free from all shame—so must her mother have thought—unless indeed it was mental blindness which we are attempting to describe, affected the whole family. Under what circumstances could George Grindle have imagined himself still right, and honest, and honourable, in seducing from her maternal home this beautiful creature? and under what other circumstances could he flatter himself as being one of the most candid of men, when he returned her upon that mother's hands, child and all, promising to revisit her in a few weeks, before the expiration of which he knew that she must find herself entirely and finally cast off from his protection.

Now, was there ever a stronger instance of the unconsciousness of one's own follies and vices than this adduced? Yet so goes the world; and an hour's "hunt-up" in town would bring before us fifty cases of even greater atrocity than this, which, if the principal actors in them were permitted, with the talent that all such men—no matter what the turn of it—must possess, you would, if you gave them time, find all of them (even if you yourself were not) fully satisfied that they were the most excellent, amiable creatures that ever existed, but who had been some time or other imposed upon, duped, deceived, and even run away with, in spite of all their own meritorious struggles, and moral remonstrances.

The reader yet knows but little of Frank's character and qualities; he has hitherto received his information at secondhand—upon hearsay evidence; but he may, perhaps, of himself have seen sufficient to feel tolerably certain that vindictiveness formed no attribute of his mind—that his natural affection for his father had been chilled by the conduct which Sir George had pursued towards him, and the marked preference he had exhibited towards his elder and half-brother. But this oppression had produced no animosity—nay, it had been for several years his constant endeavour to soothe away the little differences which occasionally existed between the baronet and his favourite son. But his genius, his tastes, his habits, were so totally at variance with those of his

nearest relations, that it was the enjoyment which the society of his kind uncle afforded him, surrounded by a circle of men and women of exalted talent and varied accomplishments, so perfectly contrasted with all he heard and saw at home, that kept him away from his father and half-brother, and not the harsh treatment which he received from them. He could not shut his eyes to the ^rofligacy and recklessness of manners and conversation which so painfully—to him—characterized the domestic scenes in which, almost revoltingly, the father and son were actors; but all that struggle was past; he had now become the independent master of a fine property, and was, as Sir George has said, "as good a man, if not better than his brother;" and therefore is it, that we, who (without any offence, we hope,) may be naturally supposed to know a little more of his qualities and character than even the reader, say, that we think the change of his circumstances involves the strongest probability of his catching with pleasure at the olive-branch, if his father and brother showed any disposition to offer it, although the positive and almost abrupt refusal to pay the least respect to the memory of Mr. Leeson certainly did not at the present moment afford any probability that they would do so.

One thing, however, is certain—the death of Mr. Leeson has effected a stir on the family chess-board; we must moreover admit, that the last move does not appear altogether favourable to Jane's adversaries. The delay which she insisted upon, and which even her father was afraid or ashamed to refuse after the disinterested expostulations of Mrs. Smylar, was, as we know, for many reasons most inconvenient to the bridegroom elect. The domiciliation of Jane with Frank, at a time when Frank, or rather the lady who had become his zealous advocate, could talk, not with hope and encouragement of his expectations, but with pleasure and confidence of his actual possessions, augured much, threatened much; and this domiciliation never could have occurred had Frank's request that his father and brother would attend the funeral of his uncle, been either granted or civilly or kindly declined. The refusal, couched in the terms it was, at once stopped all further correspondence between them; as no doubt the correspondence, as far as it went, had been debated in council, between Frank and the Anner-shams, nobody can form a second opinion as to the course that the high-minded, noble-spirited Emma advised. Recollect too, of what materials this council was composed—a woman and two men—one of the men the object of her interest and care, full of gratitude for the kindness and consideration with which he had been treated by his host and hostess, and the other man—her husband.

Thus was it less from any wish or desire to thwart old Colonel Bruff's machinations for the establishment of his daughter, and much farther from any thought of exciting her to disobedience, that Emma felt anxious that Frank Grindle should be permitted to do himself justice, and, if necessary, have the opportunity,

either personally, or through her, of explaining to Jane the real state of the case as it existed between him and his father.

But what were the feelings that occupied the mind of that said Jane, when, after having breakfasted with her father, and after a sort of semi-lecture on future duty, and on the absolute necessity of answering George's letters in the tone which he prescribed, and having received a parting kiss from the gallant officer, she found herself again in the carriage, retracing her road to the house whence she had been so recently summoned, not only to receive the addresses of Mr. Grindle, but to surrender her heart and person into his possession and custody?

Her thoughts flew rapidly from one subject to another. She could not but feel how strikingly her mind, her character, and her position were changed from what they were when she last passed the well-known tree by the road-side, near which she had last caught sight of Amersham and Miles Blackmore. She had arrived in town the most ingenuous and dutiful of daughters, imploring rather than protesting against a forced marriage; but receiving, as she was commanded to do by her father, the advances of the man she felt she never could esteem; dreading, hating, and shunning, as if she were a basilisk, the insidious, artful hypocrite Smylar, recoiling from her touch, and shuddering at her approach. What was the case now?

Jane had been closetted with Smylar late the preceding evening, in council against her father. She had passed two hours at and after breakfast with that father, and during that period, and while performing the little duties of the breakfast-table, which she had been for so many years accustomed to perform, her whole mind and thoughts were occupied with the fact that she was going to meet, to be domesticated with the man to whom, of all others upon earth, her father objected, and that with an ulterior view—for Smylar had so far gained upon her, as to induce her to listen to her entire project, which had, as the reader may easily suppose, nothing less for its object than her decided rejection of the one brother in favour of the other.

But was it possible (it was the question Jane asked herself on the way to Amersham's)—was it possible, that by an imperceptible process and progress she should in so short a space of time have become the deceiver of her father, the mistruster of Fynne, and the friend of Smylar. She trembled at her own reflections. But then, as we have before said, then came the consolatory qualifications, that she had been driven into the association by her father's harshness—that Smylar, by the interest she had displayed in the whole of the later proceedings, had convinced her that she must have been originally deceived in her character, and that she was at heart a kind and considerate woman.

Jane, when she stepped into the carriage, was considerably affected, and would have wept more than she actually did weep, had

not one of her father's "that'll-do's" roused her to a sense of the impropriety of exhibiting her feelings before the servants. She, however, received some consolation from seeing Smylar whisper something kindly in the ear of her maid Harris, and shake her affectionately by the hand before she mounted the coach-box; Jane's footman travelling solitarily in the rumble, which throughout the season had maintained its place at the back of the family coach.

Jane's mind had by no means recovered its serenity, nor had she, while left to herself on the return to scenes of former comfort, reconciled to herself the many points of her own conduct since she had left them, when she found herself at the lodge gates of Aner-sham's place.

Then it was that she felt a sickly pain on her chest—a dizziness seemed to affect her eyes—she could not cry, but she trembled—her face flushed—she hastily let down the carriage-window, as if air, or, indeed, any change of circumstances, would relieve her. A thousand thoughts crowded into her mind as she was driven through the shrubberies—she thought on what she *was* when she was last there, and on what she was *then*. Luckily the time for reflection was short—the consciousness of her defection from Emma's judgment and advice made her dread to meet her. The end, however, was achieved—the carriage stopped—the door was opened—the steps were down, and in an instant she was folded in the arms of her affectionate friend.

Her welcome was as warm as ever, and she was forthwith led, or almost carried, to what was always considered and even called "*her room*," by her affectionate hostess. There a flood of tears relieved her temporarily, but still there was a weight upon her heart and mind, of which, when she was last in that room, she had not been conscious.

Truth to say, the change *had* been great—all the history, if Jane should have the courage to tell it to Emma, would necessarily occupy much time in the narration. Emma saw that her dear friend was wholly unequal to conversation at the moment, and, therefore, having recommended quiet, and having consigned her to the care of Miss Harris (the devoted friend of Mrs. Smylar), she left her to rest until dinner-time—the only information Jane received after her arrival having been that Mr. Francis Grindle was not expected till the next day.

CHAPTER XV.

AT no period of our lives is the heart so attuned to sympathy as in the time of sorrow and bereavement; softened by the suffer-

ings of the loved and lost object of its affections, it naturally yearns for kindness and consolation, and feels with gratitude the friendly solicitude which seeks to soothe its anguish.

That Francis had been deprived of the friend—emphatically *the friend*—from whom he had experienced continued and unchanging kindness and support, we have the evidence of his own exclamation, on the threshold of the chamber of death, to prove. Driven as it were from his paternal roof, and awed into silence by the fear of ridicule and the excitement of language and conduct which he could not endure, he had uniformly sought in the house and society of his worthy uncle an asylum from persecution, and a shelter from scenes and conversations, from which, however dutifully inclined towards his father, and affectionately disposed towards his half-brother, his feelings revolted and his taste turned away.

Frank had attended the funeral of this revered and respected relation—he had listened with breathless attention to the beautiful service appointed for the burial of the dead—his eyes were fixed on the black pall which covered the remains of his beloved uncle—they were lifted from the trestles in the church, and borne to the grave; he followed, having in his eyes the image of him whose lifeless corpse was before him—again he heard the voice of the clergyman, again beheld the coffin uncovered, and saw the preparations made for lowering it into its last narrow home—it sank from his sight—the grating of the cords which served to deposit it in its last final resting-place raging in his ears, and the rattling of the dirt upon its lid seemed to announce to him the termination of his happiness on earth.

It was from this fulfilment of his melancholy duties Mr. Francis Grindle was, as soon as circumstances would permit, to proceed to pass a day or two at the Amershams'; and certainly, as the reader may himself conceive, the meeting of Jane with her future half brother-in-law (for the family were exceedingly particular in never omitting the nice distinction of half-brother) was an event full of interest for many reasons; but more especially as they were to meet, although unknown to him, strongly prepossessed in each other's favour, under the roof of a lady who was devotedly attached to the one, and strongly prejudiced in favour of the other.

Now, whether Mrs. Amersham felt some qualms of conscience in bringing these two exceedingly charming people together at so particular a crisis, without having some other visitors in the house, or whether she thought that by increasing the little party in a very small degree, she might afford the two better opportunities of talking over matters in which she now knew they were both deeply interested; or whether it seemed to her that a little variety, caused by a dash of heartless vanity and absurdity, might relieve the seriousness of the circle, and almost unconsciously attract the thoughts of Francis Grindle from the subject

then nearest his heart, we cannot say : but this we *do* know—she had contrived an arrangement which formed part of her scheme.

Whether, as we say, it were Providential, or only fortunate, that the charming Emma had invited for the succeeding week a lady and her daughter with whom Jane had not previously been much acquainted, and of whom Mr. Francis Grindle actually knew nothing, the reader must guess. On the first blush of the thing, it might appear that such a plan involved a want of feeling : but no ; Mrs. Amersham, with great knowledge of human nature, felt satisfied that nothing so well serves to alleviate the sorrow which naturally wears and depresses the heart of the survivor of the lamented lost one, than the bringing the mourner in contact with persons whom they have not before seen, and who therefore cannot in any degree be associated in his or her mind with those who are gone.

The pair—for there were two of them—invited by the Amershams, were a mother and daughter—certainly neither of them favourites with Emma ; but the lady's former husband, who was a baronet—his dignity like himself being of very brief duration—had been a connexion of Amersham's, and the lady herself had only a few days before returned to England from the continent ; and therefore, beyond any other reasons which she might have had for enlivening the house by their presence, she thought it prudent to exact their promised visit then, as likely to rescue her from any imputation on the part of Colonel Bruff—which she did not think quite impossible when the whole truth came to be known—of her having brought Mr. Francis Grindle into juxtaposition and constant association with his daughter Jane during the suspension—not exactly of hostilities—but of the intercourse between her and George.

Lady Cramly, the widow in question, was gay and flighty; voluble in conversation to an extent which is called by some “off-handishness.” That she was agreeable in society cannot be denied ; but it must also be confessed—and it is rather difficult with delicacy towards ladies in general to explain *why*—that some portion of her attraction arose from her established, and now unconquerable habit, of seldom, if ever, speaking the truth. The great points of her exaggerations were made for the establishment of her own importance and popularity ; her details of every thing connected with herself and her darling daughter Seraphine, were full of descriptions of the sensations they created, of the *éclat* which glorified them, and of the devoted attentions which were paid them wherever they went. Every body who really knew Lady Cramly, gave in with gravity and complacency to her system, of which nobody was more sensitively aware than her daughter, who occasionally endeavoured to emulate the assiduity of the man behind his master's chair, touching the history of the monkey's tail. But the attempt to

check, or curb, or control her ladyship (as she liked to be called) generally made matters worse; for not only was Seraphine—poor dear girl—snubbed for her interference, but in order to establish the accuracy of her first statement, her mother generally doubled its extravagance in her own vindication.

Lady Cramly was, or rather had been during her husband's lifetime, the authoress of a solitary work, upon the memory of which she still lived and revelled. She had published two volumes of travels. In some of the countries which she described she really *had* been, but in others certainly not; but wherever the scene was laid, Lady Cramly and Seraphine were at the top of the tree. Princes were proud to hand them to their carriage—crowned heads opened their palaces to receive them—Lady Cramly received medals, orders, and decorations, which never before had been conferred upon females. Seraphine—with a pug nose, low forehead, and high shoulders—had been painted by all the first artists, and modelled by all the first sculptors on the continent. The book of travels had gone through eleven editions—Mr. Liberal, the eminent publisher, had made six thousand pounds by it, and would have made more, only that he had foolishly insisted, out of respect to the character of her particular friend the Pope, upon expunging the authoress's account of her having waltzed with his Holiness at a masquerade during the carnival, to which he went only to have the pleasure of being her partner. Upon this circumstance, and her having been made a Burgher (or rather Burgheress) at Bruges (the only instance of the honour ever having been bestowed upon a lady), she not unfrequently descended, and so often had she told the histories amongst others, that all who heard them, including Seraphine herself, felt certain, that if nobody else believed them, Lady Cramly did.

It was of Lady Cramly the wag said that her authority ought never to be doubted, for she must always be *re-lied* upon. Nevertheless her poetical prose was very amusing, and upon Waller's principle (we presume) she was certainly an extremely eloquent and entertaining companion.

Seraphine, although plain, was pleasant, unassuming, and unpretending; contented herself in country-houses with playing waltzes and quadrilles, for brighter and more blooming belles to dance to; aspiring to nothing more than the ordinary and general attention which a modest, well-educated girl commands and receives in society.

The only fear Mrs. Amersham entertained, was that of Lady Cramly being rather too volatile and voluble under the circumstances. But as Francis Grindle was not to be with them until the day after her arrival, she hoped to tame her down in a certain degree before he came, and by permitting, or rather encouraging her to give an account of her last visit to the continent previously to his making his appearance, moderate and modify her into a suitable associate for the morrow.

Jane, who, in whatever interest she might feel in an event which interested Francis Grindle, and whatever observance of a death in the family with which she was about to be connected, was due in the way of form and respect, was of course not personally weighed down with grief for the loss of an individual whom she had never seen, was by no means displeased at the approach of the widow and her daughter. In fact, feeling the peculiarity of her own case, and apprehending little encouragement from Emma in the way of rejecting George Grindle, and incurring her father's eternal anger, she was rather pleased at the addition to the party.

And now here again we see the peculiarities of a woman's mind. Emma and her husband had talked over Jane's marriage half-a-score times, and both mutually agreed that to encourage her to rebel against the colonel's commands upon the matter, would be to ensure her unhappiness through life. With her heart and feelings, the curse of a father denounced against her disobedience, would have been the source of continued and never-ending remorse and wretchedness; and yet, believing in and admitting to herself the merits of Francis, and moreover in that belief justifying the preference of Jane, to which she attributes her disinclination to his brother, she invites this very man at a season, as we have already said, of more than usual delicacy, and when the circumstances in which he is involved render him an object of more than ordinary interest, in order to associate him with the girl of all others with whom he ought not to be associated; this all being done from a kindness, perhaps misjudged, but which originated in a sympathy that inherently and universally exists in female hearts.

While the party at Amersham's is assembling, and before we proceed to detail the dialogues which took place between Emma and Jane, let us take a glance at George Grindle *père*, and George Grindle *filz*. We know where they are, and knowing that, can make a tolerably good guess at the sort of life they are likely to lead. But circumstances have been altered within the last four or five days; George, the younger, had calculated that the announcement of his marriage in the London papers would at once decidedly, and in the easiest way for him, have proclaimed the fact to Ellen, which he had not the courage himself to communicate. Matters were now difficult—her anxiety at not hearing from him had driven her to write to him—her letter must of course be answered—but how? Thus:

“ Brighton,
“ August —, 184—

“ Dear Nelly,

“ Only conceive what a bore—I have just got your affectionate letter—delighted to hear about Tiney's tooth—which may be called wisdom beforehand—he unquestionably takes after his

mamma. But just listen, you will see the history no doubt in the London papers. Uncle Leeson, as we called him in fun—not that the affair has turned out so funny after all—is “*mort*,” as you would say at Versailles, but which, as the admirable Mathews used to observe when I was a genteel youth, means in English, no *more*. He is gone, Nelly, and has left my amiable half-brother a mint of money. It’s my own fault—if I had followed him up, and never left him, he would have left some of his stumpy to me. However, he is gone, and I am just as bad off as I was ten days ago, and what can be worse I don’t exactly see.

“How’s your Ma’? I hope, well, and all snug and comfortable. If it hadn’t been for this very unsociable connexion having dropped, as they say, I should of course have written at length before this, and reminded you of my promise, which I hope, my dear Nelly, *you haven’t forgot*, of dining with you on the brat’s birthday.

“This, however, has upset us, and here am I bunged up with the governor, who would neither go himself, nor let me go to my half-uncle’s funeral, which I wished him to do; but being, as you know, uncommonly shy of a ‘shell out,’ he said No, and so we came down here to mope decently till Monday-week. This is called decent—it may be, but it’s deucedly dull. However, your kind letter cheers me up a bit; and although, as you know, I am not a finished correspondent, I am delighted to answer you off hand; because when the account of the departure of the elderly Hippopotamus reached you, you might think I was really sorry for him.

“I shall write soon again, when we have recovered from our grief—mind that, Nelly, and hope to send something to you before I see you—only, as I say, the governor is the hitch. Rely upon it Nelly, that gentleman—old I won’t call him, not only because he looks nearly as young as myself, but because *old gentleman* is the nick—or rather old nick name for the black dandy with the hoofs and tail, what lives in a ‘werry’ hot climate. All I hope is, he won’t drive me into a corner.

“Give my best love to mamma and to Tiney. Has he lost the stick presented to him by Mr. Somebody, I forget his name at the minute, or has that uncommon fast-going chap made his appearance in Mrs. Eversfield’s *salon*? If he should arrive, treat him gently—recollect his good nature to the brat. Write soon in answer to this, because if the governor keeps his pockets shut much longer, after all the sacrifices I have made in parting from you for the present for fear of him, I may commit some rashness which would be exceedingly disagreeable to all parties.

“And so adieu, dear Nelly, and believe me,

“Always affectionately yours,

“GEORGE GRINDLE.”

FATHERS AND SONS.

This affectionate letter was written and placed on the writing-table of Mr. Grindle, in his lodgings at Brighton; and before the ink with which the concluding part of it was dry, he began the following epistle to Miss Jane Bruff:—

“ Brighton.

“ Dearest Jane,

“ That's not too familiar now, my sweet girl; if it had not been for the melancholy circumstance of my poor dear uncle's death, you would, within a few hours, have been mine altogether. What an event! My father, as you know, never was upon particularly good terms with him; and in fact, his second marriage made a division in the family which, however much I might sometimes be inclined to laugh about it, nobody in the world could lament more than myself.

“ My father's feelings, however, were not to be overcome, and therefore, as you know, we are here. I am delighted to find that the expectations of my half-brother Frank have been realized, and that he inherits a considerable fortune.

“ For my own part, I don't see why we should have broken up from London on account of Mr. Leeson's death; but I do whatever I am taught to consider right—principle, as I say to myself, is every thing, and I would rather sacrifice every wish in the world, so that I might act upon its dictates. Else as far as fashion goes, nobody mourns for anybody now. A fortnight's black for a father; if very particular, a month for a mother; and as to not being about as usual because somebody belonging to one is dead—why, as you know, nobody stays at home but the dead man himself, and he would be too glad to come out if he could.

“ This sounds as if I were joking on serious matters; but I am vexed at what I think our needless separation. However, your excellent father—one of the best and most agreeable men I ever met with,—seemed to feel that it *was* right, and so did *you*—therefore I must not complain.

“ I flatter myself that I have succeeded in getting into the good graces of that excellent creature Mrs. Smylar, whom I respect, because I know she loves *you*; we must cherish her when we are—by Jove! what was I going to write—I mean, dear Jane, as that capital fellow Jack Topper says in the farce ‘When we two are one.’ I think her uncommon.

“ I am regularly jealous of our friends the Am—ams. Why the deuce couldn't they have invited *me* to *you*? To be sure, I don't know them, but that in these days of promiscuous and unpremeditated hospitality, is nothing. Perhaps I shall put on my brazen mask some day next week, and invade you. Would you be *very* angry?

“ The carriage will be quite entirely finished out and out, and beyond every thing, by the end of next week. Briggs considers it what the painters call his ‘*chef-d'œuvre*,’ but which I say ought

to be his ‘chay Dover.’ It is a perfect thing in its way, and I hope you will like it. The only sort of set-off I have for the delay of ‘the ceremony,’ is the certainty that the ‘vehicle,’ as the coachmen say, will be all the better for it.

“I need not press you to write me during your exile, as in course you will. The address to us here you have already; if a change takes place you shall know it. My father is all of a heap about the postponement; but as I say with the chap who wrote Shakspeare, ‘What must be, must; and what can’t be cured, must be endured.’

“Adieu, ever affectionately yours,

“GEORGE GRINDLE.”

“I think you may present my compliments to your friends the Amershams, under all the circumstances, and just hint at what I have said about the brazen mask.”

Now these two letters lay upon Mr. Grindle’s table together, ready for folding, putting in envelopes, sealing and directing; and it is not quite impossible that the reader may think, that in the pure spirit of farce, it would be quite allowable, if not even natural, that George Grindle in his agitation, and what the Hebrew schoolmaster called “the confusion of the moment,” might put the two letters in the wrong covers, and so create scenes of infinite embarrassment and distress. But no—in real life these fortunate mistakes seldom, if ever, occur. Upon this occasion nothing of the kind happened. Mr. George Grindle folded, sealed, and addressed his letters exactly as he had originally intended, when he wrote them, that they should be folded, sealed, and addressed. It was not destined that either accident or carelessness should develop to the interesting creatures most deeply concerned the strange peculiarity of their positive and relative positions.

And how were plodding on, during this period, our large and disagreeable colonel and his prime-minister? Of course, Smylar was in daily correspondence with Miss Harris, Jane’s maid, and was therefore kept regularly in possession of the history of all the proceedings at the Amershams’. She rather disliked that news, that other visitors were expected besides Frank Grindle; but upon weighing the matter over, she seemed to fall unconsciously into the views of Mrs. Amersham on the subject, which views she herself, as we have already observed, had somewhat unaccountably permitted herself to adopt.

As for what might be called the domestic comfort of Bruff’s house, left as he was in town, it is but just to observe, that in whatever degree Mrs. Smylar might ordinarily contribute to its maintenance, she was just at this time so divided in her views, so puzzled in her mind, and so agitated in her feelings, that matters certainly did not go on so smoothly as usual. The policy

she had adopted and the course she was pursuing were of the desperate order ; as has been already said, a word, a whisper, a mislaid letter, a misplaced confidence, would blow the whole of her deep-laid schemes to atoms ; and while she began to suspect Miss Harris of feeling an interest in the merits and attractions of the colonel's own man, she also trembled to think of the possibility of that gallant officer's taking a very important step, which would utterly destroy her brightest prospects.

He certainly was much more from home than was his wont ; he saw less of her when he *was* at home. Smylar could not exactly account for the altered conduct of her master during the last two or three days ; and hence arose suspicions, the very existence of which, in her mind, rendered *her* less agreeable, or serviceable, or whatever it may be called, to the colonel.

Favourites have always plenty of enemies, and one of the colonel's servants, who knew (not that she seemed to try to conceal) the ultimate object of her hopes and wishes, suggested, somewhat hypothetically to be sure, that when the only daughter of a gentleman of "master's" time of life, was going to be married, it was natural enough that he himself should look out for somebody who could compensate him for the loss of her society.

Now, so far as this opinion went, nobody more cordially agreed in it than Mistress Smylar ; but when this said servant began to deduce from his hypothesis something like a belief which existed in his mind, that the colonel was becoming exceedingly attentive to Lady Gramm, Mrs. Smylar's feelings and sentiments immediately underwent a most serious alteration, and the next flash through her speculations was a resolution, founded even upon so slight a basis as this, to run down poor Lady Gramm in the colonel's estimation the first moment she could get the opportunity, Lady Gramm being of an age and size that nobody but such a man as the odious colonel could ever think of incurring. To be sure, there *was* a title, and it seemed as if his anxiety that his daughter should have a title, such as it was, had worked him up into the small ambition of having a wife with a title for himself. But this was malice prepense and aforethought of the butler, who had been utterly discarded from the favour of Mrs. Smylar ever since his unexpected intrusion into the dinner-parlour in quest of sugar-candy, on the memorable evening of Sir George's somewhat unwelcome visit. From that time he felt satisfied that any attempts he might make upon the heart—or rather the hand—of Mrs. Smylar, would be vain : and thenceforth, still affecting all sorts of kindness and civility towards her, he never lost an opportunity, favourable or unfavourable, whenever he could, to excite, if not absolute jealousy, something like an irritable distrust in the conduct of her diurnal report of the colonel's proceedings.

It is not an unpleasant sight to see roguery and duplicity thus

thwarted; nor can there be a life more harassing, or more deservedly uncomfortable, than that of one of the disciples of the Smylar school, who exist upon falsehood and hypocrisy, and whose deviation of one inch to the right or the left from the crooked path of their base and hateful policy, must as inevitably annihilate their hopes, as an incidental tumble of a train off the railway settles the fate of the infatuated passengers by the iron hearse invented for the purpose of cheating and monopoly, to supersede good old English horses and carriages, and the best roads for travelling in the world.

Whether out of this wheel-within-wheel system—we do not mean of steam travelling, but of domestic intrigue in Colonel Bruff's house—any thing is likely to arise really calculated to destroy the influence of the ringleted Venus of Bullock's-smithy, we are not yet prepared to state; but as far as affairs had yet gone, it certainly was exceedingly fortunate that the Grindle family were separated, and that Bruff, no more than Sir George and his eldest son, had any notion of the real state of circumstances.

Leave we for the moment the colonel and the syren undisturbed, except by the butler's jealousy. Believe we or not his hankering after the aristocratic alliance with the widow of Lord Graumm (all that, as the phrase goes, "will keep"), and let us just look at affairs as they are progressing or likely to progress at the Amershams'.

"Well, Jane," said Emma, when Jane was able to hear the well-known voice she loved so much,—"well, Jane, and so it unfortunately happens that you seem to think Mr. Francis Grindle infinitely more agreeable than his brother George."

"Emma," said Jane, "I have no concealments from you; if in your knowledge of Mr. Francis Grindle's merits and accomplishments, you have found a reason for my not liking his brother, let me ask you, what then? A month ago I did not even know the family. Why—tell me, why—is it necessary I should marry into it, or marry at all?"

"Merely, my dear girl," said Mrs. Amersham, "because your father says you must, and because you are too dutiful to ~~not~~ obey him."

"You misunderstand me, Emma," said Jane. "What I am saying, if I can make myself understood, involves no question of filial obedience. What I mean to ask is, why is it necessary that I should marry, when I would rather remain single? or if it is essential to my father's comfort that I *should* marry, why is it necessary to marry into this particular family?"

"I'm sure I cannot answer that question, said Mrs. Amersham. "All I know of the matter is, that your father, for reasons best known to himself, commands you to marry one son of Sir George Grindle; and you, as is not in the slightest degree unnatural, choose to marry another, and—"

"My dearest friend," said Jane, interrupting her, "that is the very point upon which we differ. Of the two Grindles, I admit I prefer, in every point of view, *your* friend Mr. Frank; but that is not *my* point. Why should I marry one brother because I dislike another?"

"There are many results," said Emma, "in this world, which are perfectly unaccountable. Don't you see, my dear child, if you had been left alone here, and your dear father had not found out these people, none of this would have happened; but it did happen, and having been introduced to a very disagreeable man (at least by *your* account), whom your father wants you to make your husband, you chanced to fall in with a very agreeable one, whom you yourself wish to marry."

"Me!" said Jane; "I wish to marry nobody. All *I say*, is, between the two Grindles, there can be no comparison; but what then? with my father's views and intentions, the simple fact of their being so nearly related has nothing in the world to do with the matter. He would be as much opposed to my marrying Mr. Frank Grindle—even supposing such a thought had ever entered my head—as he would to my marrying a beggar. Emma, Emma, even *you* mistake me. All I ask is, to be relieved from all importunities on the subject of marriage, and—"

"Choose for yourself," interrupted Mrs. Amersham. "That is a very agreeable scheme in life, but not always to be worked out. Ah, Jane, if my gentle hints about that most worthy of men, my friend Miles Blackmore, could have had their effect upon you, all this might have been saved."

"How?" said Jane.

"How?" replied Emma. "Why long before this family of the Grindles became known to your father, we might have made an offer—I say we—but *he* would have made an offer in every point unexceptionable, and one which the colonel would not have failed to accept, with your own sanction and approval."

"What my father might have done in such a case," said Jane, "I cannot of course anticipate; but I do assure you, respecting, esteeming, regarding with every friendly feeling Mr. Miles Blackmore, I never—never could have accepted him as a husband."

"Was he not tenderly devoted to you, Jane?" asked Mrs. Amersham.

"He did me the kindness of paying me more attention than, with his cultivated talents and general attainments, I perhaps deserved," said Jane.

"Was he ever happy except in your company?" asked Emma.

"I don't know," said Jane, "but he never seemed happy in it."

"That was the surest sign of affection for you," said Emma; "distrustful of himself, watchful of your thoughts and wishes, his whole mind was absorbed in the consideration of your merits."

"No," said Jane, "if I ever had thought—and please to recollect I never did think—of Mr. Miles Blackmore in the way you imagine, and in which you speak of him, all such thoughts would have been driven from my mind by an abstraction in his, which, whenever we were gayest—whenever in this happy house we were most cheerful, and when I had sung him his favourite song—seemed to overwhelm him, and distract his thoughts from every thing around him. Rely upon it, Emma—I am no great conjuror, nor can I predict or foretell—but rely upon it, there is something weighing upon the mind of Mr. Miles Blackmore, which will some day or other cause a sensation—at least if it ever comes to a disclosure."

"The something weighing on his mind," said Emma, "was his affection for you. However, putting your opinions and feelings upon that point in the same scale with the colonel's determination, and your engagement to be married to another man, it seems useless to talk about that. He is gone—I am perfectly certain driven away by your cruelty, you tyrant—to live in France for some time; and so, he being out of the way, what we have to do is to discuss the relative merits of these two Grindles."

"There, Emma, again I must beg to check you," said Jane; "I have over and over again told you that I cannot see the necessity of my marrying into this family, or into any family, being perfectly satisfied as I am; but because you expect Mr. Francis Grindle here, do not imagine that I am about to institute a comparison—"

"Stop, stop, my dear Jane," interrupted Emma, "I do not imagine anything more than I can comprehend. You left town, as you admit, to avoid—as long as circumstances permitted—the attentions of your intended: well; when you were kind enough to accept our invitation, you knew his brother was to be of the party."

"Well, Emma?" said Jane, looking steadfastly at her friend.

"Now, Jane," said Mrs. Amersham, "did you expressly state to your papa, that your anxiety to come to us, was to get rid of the visits of Mr. George Grindle?"

"Certainly not," said Jane, "the peculiar circumstances of Mr. Leeson's death, rendered it a matter of delicacy that some step of the sort should be taken."

"Very right, dear Jane," said Mrs. Amersham; and now let me ask you, my love, did you mention to your papa that you expected to meet the brother of Mr. George Grindle here?"

Jane, colouring up, looked at once reproachfully and imploringly at Emma.

"I—I," faltered she.

"Ha! ha! ha!" said Mrs. Amersham, who saw the way in which her shot had told; there, there, go and dress for dinner,

my dear girl, and be sure you put on your best looks, for most likely he will be here, at latest in the evening."

Jane attempted neither reply nor remonstrance, but proceeded to do as her kind and intelligent hostess had directed.

There is one part of the history with which hereabouts the reader ought to be acquainted, inasmuch as it throws some light upon the characters of two persons who take prominent parts in its progress. Although Frank Grindle was expected at the Amershams', and although as we know it was Mrs. Amersham's object to bring them together, and although Jane Bruff knew she was to meet him there, Francis Grindle did not know that Jane was to be of the family party—Mrs. Amersham having resolved on "getting up" what she called a surprise, hoping upon the principle of killing two birds with one stone, by the suddenness of their meeting, at once, to change the character of his thoughts and feelings, and drive them into another channel. Thus, with the best intentions in the world, she was, as we have already said, working more harm and mischief for both the dear friends about whom she was most interested, than their bitterest enemy could have imagined or contrived.

Jane had been five days at the Amershams', and had of course received George Grindle's elegantly-written epistle, and had not answercd it—indeed she scarcely knew what to say—it did not seem to require an answer, or if it did, her literary correspondence with men had hitherto been confined to replies to her father's letters; and after showing the beautiful record of her lover's affections to Emma, who was sufficiently *ill-bred* to laugh at it most immoderately, she determined upon leaving it unanswered.

"That is my advice," said Mrs. Amersham; "if he is really devoted to you, his anxiety will force him to write again, and then perhaps he may say something intelligible: if he is not sincere, his conduct will take umbrage at your silence, and he will be angry, and no much the better."

When a friend entirely agrees with one, how readily his advice is adopted; and affronting George Grindle would have essentially aided the success of Emma's well-meant manœuvre, she as gladly gave her opinion as Jane acted upon it.

The next day Mr. Francis Grindle was to arrive, and there can be no question as to the excitement which his approach produced on Jane; for through the activity of her admirable counsellor in London, who detested her, curiously and unconsciously seconded and supported by her friend in the country, who sincerely loved her, the innocent girl found herself at once disobeying her father's commands, having prevaricated to obtain his leave to do so—affronting the lover to whom that father had actually engaged her—and proposing to meet and live under the same roof with the rival of that accepted lover, who, moreover,

was the object of his hatred, and that of her future father-in-law. And all this combination of circumstances was the result of contrivances of others, some devised with the worst, and others with the best intentions.

The day announced for Frank's arrival was a most important and agitating one. It grew late, and Jane's agitation increased. Her attentive maid, Harris, exerted herself to support and sustain her. Jane accounted to her for her nervousness, by mentioning the real cause—her apprehensions of meeting her future brother-in-law, and might even have gone the length of telling her that she was now almost sorry that she had come to the Amershams' when he was expected. This ingenuous expression of her thoughts was unquestionably injudicious in Jane; but Miss Harris had lived with her for several years, and had been trusted with all such secrets as Jane Bruff with her single-mindedness and simplicity ever had to confide to anybody, and therefore it might not much signify; however, as soon as Jane was dressed for dinner, Miss Harris wrote off an account of each day's proceedings to Mrs. Smylar, including besides the detail of what she had seen, or been told, a report of whatever conversations she had overheard.

The day wore on—dinner was over—no Francis Grindle. Something had occurred to delay him. This procrastination of Jane's anxiety was most painful, and the evident effect it produced upon her manners and conversation, afforded Emma several opportunities for exerting her playful raillery.

The clock was just striking nine, when the sound of wheels announced the approach of a carriage.

"There he is," said Amersham. "I suppose in this civilized age of railroads he couldn't get horses; I dare say, poor fellow, he has had no dinner, or—"

At this moment, when Jane's heart beat infinitely more rapidly than it ought to have done, and Amersham was going forth to receive his visitor, the drawing-room doors were flung open, and a servant announced in a stentorian voice—

"Lady and Miss Cramly."

The sound of the names, the sight of the people, were at once a shock and relief to poor Jane, and she scarcely knew whether she was standing on her head or her heels: while Lady Cramly bounced into the room and almost smothered Mrs. Amersham with kisses; Seraphine following in her turn, and receiving Emma's salute in the calmest and most approved manner.

"Well, my love," said her ladyship, "here we are—taking you by surprise—a day before we were expected; but, as I said to Seraphine, I was sure you wouldn't mind us. And how do you do, my dear Mr. Amersham? dear me, how well you are looking—and so like our friend, Count Giginawhisky,—isn't he, Seraphine?"

"Count —?" said Seraphine.

"My dear child!" exclaimed the lady, "don't you remember Giginawhisky—the man who was so exceedingly civil to us at Potsdam—with all those crosses and things, and I said at the time how handsome he was—"

"And so like Mr. Amersham?" said Emma; "upon my word, Lady Cramly, you'll make my poor dear husband more conceited than he is. Allow me to present a very dear friend of mine, Miss Bruff."

"Oh, too happy," said her ladyship; "dear me—well—Seraphine—to be sure I *have* the faculty of discovering likenesses. But Seraphine, isn't this young lady a perfect fac-simile of our sweet little princess—dear, dear, what *was* her name?—who lent us her palace at Naples, before we went to the Duke's—I declare at the moment I quite forget—but she was so civil, that the recollection of her charming countenance is perfectly fresh on my mind. I have got her down in my diary."

"Would you like, my dear Lady Cramly," said Mrs. Amersham, "to get rid of your cloak? and you, Seraphine, shall I show you your rooms, as a good hostess should?"

"Have you dined, Lady Cramly?" said Amersham.

"Oh! dined, ages ago," said the lady. "I have got into a habit of early dining; and the people at the inn where we stopped were so immensely civil—of course, they knew me through the servants; but you really never saw such attention—every part of the little town was ransacked for dainties for our table. I never saw in a small English inn any thing like it. Wasn't it charmingly good, Seraphine?"

"Yes, Ma," said Seraphine; "I thought the roast fowl very—"

—"Oh, my dear child, I am not talking of the fowls," almost screamed her ladyship; "however, I *must* say you are one of the smallest possible eaters, and care nothing about it. I'm ready to attend you," added she, turning to Emma, who accordingly proceeded to marshal the way that she should go.

"That's a lively bird, Jane," said Amersham, when the doors were closed; "you'll have some fun with *her*, and more if you make friends with her quiet little daughter, who is all truth, and lets it out, too, whenever she sees occasion."

"But I suppose they continually quarrel upon these points?" said Jane.

"No," replied Amersham; "the mother generally snubs her child, and cuts her short; but as she bears it patiently, and makes no answer, the affair blows over. By and by, we shall hear why she has come to us a day before we expected her. You must keep your countenance if you can, especially as it is so exceedingly like that of her dear friend the little Princess, whose name she don't recollect."

"She certainly seems an extraordinary person," said Jane.

"I tell you what, Miss Jenny," said Amersham, "if our friend Frank doesn't make his appearance before the post goes out, I shall just trouble him with a line. He cannot be ill—at least I hope not; but he seems so regular in all his engagements, that I get uneasy about him, being as he is alone, and under circumstances full of grief and vexation. I'll go and write now. Shall I send your love, Jane?"

"I should think not," said Jane.

"What, you mean to keep it for him till he comes," said Mr. Amersham.

"Now really and truly," said Jane, "if you talk in that way, I shall write up to papa—"

"What, to send Sugar and Salt?"

"Yes," said Jane, "and run away home forthwith."

"Well, Jane," said Amersham, "you shan't be worried. However, I'll write. Excuse me for five minutes."

Jane smiled assent, and he proceeded to his room to write and dispatch the "remind;" but her smile soon turned to a thoughtful expression of countenance. She felt that there was too much truth in Amersham's joke to make it agreeable, and was again warned of the perilous part she had been induced to act.

By the same post which would, for a short distance, carry Frank Grindle's letter, the following would be despatched to London:—

"Dear Mrs. Smylar,

"I begin very much to doubt whether it was quite prudent to let Miss Jane come here at the same time with F. G. without the colonel's knowledge. From something she said to-day, I think it not unlikely that she will get frightened, and write and tell her father all about it, and then you will get into a pretty scrape. Think this over; and whether it would not be best to tell him yourself, and say you never knew any thing about F. G.'s coming here till you heard of it from me. He is to be here this evening, so now consider; and at all events believe me,

"Yours sincerely,

"E. HARRIS."

This letter given (*par parenthèse*) to the reader, will serve still further to illustrate the really perilous position of poor Jane. It may seem strange that people could be found to combine against so much sweetness and goodness as those of which her mind and character were composed; but Smylar's power was very extraordinary—she had her point to carry, her ends to achieve, and if in her progress towards success, she had sufficient ability to dupe and deceive Colonel Bruff and his daughter, both in opposite interests, there can be no doubt that she had sufficient talent to win Miss Harris over to her cause, aiding her plausibility, as she was in the habit of doing, by admitting her to be a partici-

pator in the refections of her private apartments. Amersham's letter to Frank Grindle ought to be recorded, for reasons, the cogency of which may be hereafter shown. It ran thus:—

“Thursday Evening.

“ My dear Sir,

“ We have waited and waited for your promised arrival, to-day, and are grievedly disappointed that you are not come. We sincerely hope that neither illness nor accident detains you. We expect you without fail to-morrow; but as the lateness of the hour at which our post leaves this, affords me the opportunity of writing, pray let us know why you are not with us this evening, and that you will be here in the course of the day, and above all that you are well; or whether my going over to you would, on any matter of business, be useful or agreeable.

“ My wife desires her best regards. We think we can give you some amusement in the society of a lady and her daughter, who are our only visitors, except our very old and dear friend, Jane Bruff.

“ Believe me, my dear Sir,

“ Faithfully yours,

“ E. AMERSHAM.”

Before these letters were dispatched; Lady Cramly, Seraphine, Jane, and Amersham, were all again reassembled in the *salon*; and Amersham, who was anxious that Jane should as early as possible understand some of the merits of the new arrivals, began a course of showing them off, which never failed to produce its effect. Wherefore after casting a look at Miss Bruff which she did not perfectly comprehend, and another at his wife, which she perfectly did, he opened the campaign by inquiring of Lady Cramly if she had stayed any time in Paris. The train he had laid was fired, and off she went.

“ Yes,” said the lady. “ I was there ten or twelve days; quite enough for Paris at this season, although to *me* seasons make no difference. Paris, you know, is France. The spirit of concentration is universal, and certainly out of the capital, one is there out of the world. I, of course, saw every thing, and heard every thing. We were *feted* in the most charming manner. It would have amused you to see me a great lady. I like Thiers very much, because I think him a nice sharp little fellow; and I admire Guizot, he is so gentle and so placid. Well now really you would have fancied me a great diplomatist. There was Guizot talking to me for three-quarters of an hour on the state of England; and he had no sooner left me, than Thiers tried to get out of me all the information he could; and although I was cautious, of course, he confessed he understood more of English policy from what I had said to him than he ever knew before. You heard him say so, Scraphine?”

"Why no, Ma'," said Seraphine, "I did not."

"Ah well, child," said her ladyship, "that is because you didn't attend; you had enough to do to talk to your beaux. I never saw a young lady more beset by Parisian dandies than that quiet, modest-looking creature."

"La, Ma'!" said Seraphine?"

"Were you much at the Tuilleries?" said Amersham to Lady Cramly, looking sideways at Jane.

"Three or four times," said the lady; "in fact we really were so engaged that we were obliged to shirk a royal command or two. The King was exceedingly gracious. He was very fond of *me* when I was a girl. At that time he was living at Twickenham, and my dear father, who had a beautiful place there, used to send him flowers, flounders, and French-rolls; and I used to call him Phil. I was quite a baby then, but His Majesty recollects me perfectly, and was exceedingly good-natured, and his beautiful family vastly civil. I have jotted it all down in my diary, which you shall read, my dear Mrs. Amersham, before it is published.

"Oh," said Amersham, "you mean to publish again?"

"Why that is not decided upon," replied the lady. "I have had offers from almost all the publishers in London, from my old friend Liberal, of Albemarle-street, down to the house of Sneak and Shuffie, of—I forget where—all at my feet; but the dear Marquis of Nottingham, who was so uncommonly civil to us at Florence, and who is really and truly one of the most charming creatures in the world, and so fond of Seraphine, says that I ought not to be too hasty."

"The power of making tours," said Jane, "must be exceedingly delightful. I have never left England."

"Nor ever will till you are pleased to marry," said Lady Cramly. "When I was of course much younger than I am now, I used to give myself airs, and turn up my nose at half a hundred lovers, and especially at those whom my poor dear papa recommended; but at last I found that, independent as I fancied myself while single, I was the most dependent and helpless creature in the world; so I took the man of my choice. To be sure, he was only a baronet, and that of 1725, but then he was a good, kind creature; and although he is gone (as I was saying one day to the Pope), the way we must all go, he has left me that dear child, who is indeed a treasure."

Jane and Emma exchanged looks, which Seraphine observed, and most undutifully gave another. *

"Did you visit Venice this trip?" said Amersham.

"Venice?" exclaimed the lady. "Why do you think I could ever leave Portman-square without visiting Venice? Why the dear Doge is one of the oldest friends I have. He speaks English wonderfully well, and laughs ready to kill himself when I

call him playfully, in *my* way, ‘my Old Doggy.’ He is a capital fellow; isn’t he Seraphine?’”

“Very agreeable indeed, Ma,” said Seraphine.

“Do you sing much now, Seraphine?” said Mrs. Amersham, wishing to throw a chance of joining in the conversation into the poor girl’s hands, and, at the same time, to prevent her husband for carrying his exhibition of her mother’s absurdities to too great an extent.

“Sometimes,” said Seraphine, gently.

“Sometimes!” said Lady Cramly; “that is remarkably modest. Why, my dear Mrs. Amersham, her singing is the cause of our being here to-day, instead of to-morrow.”

“La, Ma’!” said Seraphine.

“Perhaps you don’t know it,” said her mother, “but so it is. If we had stayed over to-day at Lord Castlemount’s we should have met the Duke of Rochester; and Lord Castlemount told *me* that if his Royal Highness had heard Seraphine sing, he would have invited us to stay with him at Fitzroy-park; and if his Royal Highness had done so, it would of course have been a command, and we must have gone; which to me, Mrs. Amersham, who love our royal family with a loyalty derived from my dear father, would have been both an honour and a pleasure; but as we had promised *you* for to-morrow, I thought it best to get away to-day, for fear we should have been kept a week or two.”

Here Jane and Amersham exchanged looks, so did Mrs. Amersham and Seraphine.

How much further this particular conversation, with its accompanying glances, and counter-glances, might have gone on, we cannot say; but just as Lady Cramly was beginning a history of having driven herself up Vesuvius in a London-built tilbury, the butler came to announce that the usual social and sociable meal of the Amershams—supper—was ready; and in spite of the splendid and magnificent banquet which had been prepared by the inhabitants of Slushpool for her ladyship’s dinner at the Magpie and Stump in that beautiful village, she “nothing loth,” accepted the proffered arm of her host, and they led the way to the round table long since commemorated in our annals.

CHAPTER XVI.

IT is impossible to doubt the difficulty, to say nothing of the delicacy of poor Jane’s position: indeed it would be superfluous to call the reader’s attention to what may really be called the perils to which she is exposed, knowing so much as by this time

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he does. Not a word could pass her lips—not a look, not a sigh, could escape her, without being noted down by Miss Harris. The audible scratching of the pen of the recording inquisitor behind the curtain, does give something like warning to the self-incriminating victim, and may sometimes serve to check his communicativeness; but with Jane—no—her fate, her fortunes, and her happiness seemed to be at the mercy of persons, who ought, upon every principle of honesty and rectitude, to have upheld her cause “against a world in arms.”

But now, as to Miss Harris’s letter to the besmeared Smylar. When she got it, she read it through twice before she even laid it down. It sometimes happens that plain common sense beats *finesse* hollow. Smylar had laid her plans skilfully enough to answer her great purpose; but Smylar had not, in grasping the subject at large, prepared herself for certain little incidental events. She knew, to be sure, the purity and honesty of Jane’s mind; but, judging from her own feelings, and regulating her conduct towards her young mistress by the scale of her own passions, she thought there could be no doubt whatever of the young lady’s acceding to any arrangements which would bring her and the man whom she liked under the same roof; more especially after she had, as she thought effectually succeeded in undermining—to a certain extent—the high principle by which she had, up to the present stage of her life, been actuated.

Mrs. Smylar just at this period was on the edge of a precipice, or, one might more appositely say, performing her evolutions (as probably she had frequently done in early life) on the tight-rope, from which the most trifling false step would bring her to the ground. To be sure, Miss Harris generously acted clown for her, and chalked her shoes to add to her security, with all the winning grace of hollow friendship. When she got that young person’s letter, which at once showed her how much was to be feared from the timidity or sensibility of sweet Jenny Bruff, the difficulty and delicacy of her own position were made evident to her. Then came the question—What was next to be done? Having acted as she had, and having concerted the scheme for bringing together those whom she wished to love each other—if they did not love each other already—how was she to proceed under the belief of a break-down in the resolution of her doomed victim?—for so she considered Jane, and victim she meant her to be.

Several questions were now to be mooted by the heroine of Bullock & Smithy, and one—a very important one—was, touching the capacity of Miss Harris for judging the probability of effects from apparent causes; and whether she had—looking to her qualifications—formed a just estimate of Jane’s feelings and apprehensions.

The next question was, whether, since pens and ink have been sent upon earth for the purpose of man’s and woman’s destruc-

tion, Jane, if she *did* break down, and write to her father, would or would not, in the excitement of the moment, the plenitude of her repentance, and the anxiety for reconciliation with her parent, inform the colonel that the scheme of bringing her and Frank Grindle together, originated entirely with his confidential adviser

Then came a third question; whether, in order to prevent such an explosion, she should venture upon the yet untried experiment of herself writing to Jane. The debate upon this, however, lasted but a few moments. She felt that she could not check the impulse of the daughter without inculpating herself with the father. What then *was* to be done? Writing to Harris for further particulars might equally commit her; and Harris, according to her notions, was not sufficiently acute to comprehend any thing put hypothetically, or without a plain statement of facts and names; and so the mill-work of Mrs. Smylar's brain went on and on, and round and round, until at last—by no means an uncommon case—she resolved to let matters take their own course, always qualifying this resolution by the reflection, that, by the family arrangement of submitting all the letters which arrived per post to her *surveillance*: in the first instance, she might with her theatrical activity withhold any one which came to hand addressed to the colonel from Jane, leaving it to some further stretch of ingenuity to give such cogent reasons to the poor girl for what she had done, as might convince her that her interposition was based on the best motives, and no doubt would eventually produce the most favourable results.

Still it was not impossible, nor even improbable, that Jane might direct her letter to the colonel at the Doldrum—knowing as she did how much of his time he passed at that club. If once the implicit confidence which he had so long reposed in Smylar was shaken—no matter however little—the violence and abruptness of his temper and character would have burst forth, and she would have been sent off at a moment's notice; all her hopes frustrated, all her expectations wrecked. And so we may at least indulge in the belief that the fiend in human shape—or rather in the shape in which her mantua-maker chose her to appear—must have passed a sleepless, miserable night; her uneasiness upon the main point of her career being by no means mitigated in consequence of the evident addiction of Bruff to the society and *cercle* of Lady Gramm.

At Amersham's the complexity of feelings was scarcely less embarrassing. Jane, as we have seen, was too acute not to perceive the anxiety of Emma for Frank's arrival, nor could Emma blind herself to the longing, dreading, lingering, hoping, fearing feelings of Jane; and as the hours wore on, poor Jane gradually became more tremblingly alive to the delicacy of her position in consenting to become the companion in a country-

house of a most agreeable and accomplished man, so very peculiarly placed in regard to her as was this amiable brother-in-law elect; but still she could not summon courage enough to speak to Mrs. Amersham on the point, for fear of incurring an imputation of vanity.

"And why," said she to herself, "may not this Mr. Grindle come here as well as any other friend of the Amershams? It is true that he is destined to be a near connexion of mine—a strong reason why he *should* be here. If I remonstrate upon this point, I show either that I fancy myself charming enough to drive him into a dishonourable rivalry with his brother-in-law, or that I have not sufficient firmness of principle, or dignity of character, to withstand his fascinations, which are to lead *me* to a violation of a contract, which in the other case I am to be sufficiently vain to imagine him anxious to invalidate." And so Jane said to herself further, "Let him come—I know my heart—I know my duty—he shall be my friend, my brother-in-law—but my father's will must be obeyed; and if it be, Francis Grindle and I shall naturally see much of each other. Why have I even for a moment alarmed myself at his visit upon this occasion?"

Now all this, which is perfectly reasonable, perfectly philosophical, and perfectly just, Jane, as we have just observed, "said to herself," but she said it to nobody else; and when Harris, who was watching every turn of her countenance, and catching every syllable that fell from her lips, for the purpose of reporting to "head-quarters," saw the struggles which were passing in her mind, she felt more convinced than ever that Mrs. Smylar's scheme was a failure; and actuated by that apprehension, coupled with a prospective certainty of being herself turned off by the colonel in case her secret correspondence with Smylar should be discovered, she in her turn began to calculate whether, if Smylar adopted a bolder line of conduct, she herself should not write to the colonel to tell him what was going on.

This "wheel within wheel" system, certainly looks threatening to some of the plotters; nor was Miss Harris's slight attachment to Mr. Rumfit, the colonel's own man and butler, the former—and perhaps even actual—aspirent to Mrs. Smylar's hand, likely to check her exertions in the way of self-preservation in the establishment, even at the risk of jeopardizing the "great lady in the little parlour;" and as her fears increased, so proportionably increased her restlessness as to longer keeping the secret of Mr. Frank's visit; whereupon she determined, if she did not hear from Mrs. Smylar in the morning, to take upon herself the task of enlightening the colonel upon that most interesting subject.

She did *not* hear from Mrs. Smylar, nor was she likely ever to hear from her upon any matter which she considered important, inasmuch as upon Mrs. Smylar's established principle she never could be brought to commit herself in writing. She would have

liked a dialogue with Miss Harris extremely well; in the course of which she might have extracted from her the circumstances on which her apprehensions were grounded; but suspecting as she did that Miss Harris was not entirely indifferent to Mr. Rumfit, whose presumptuous advances she (Smylar) had considered it due to her station to check and discourage; and, moreover, thinking it not quite impossible that a correspondence might be going on between them, inasmuch as Rumfit by his activity and assiduity might get possession of the letters even before *her*, or might have his own particular despatches thrown down what the kitchen-maid called the "hairy," or directed to him at the Butlers' Club (of which he was a distinguished member), she determined entirely to keep aloof, and hover like a hawk over her prey till pouncing-time came.

One hears a vast deal of the "republic" of letters, and of the "equality" of human beings, and the universality of the rights and privileges of mankind; but high-sounding as all these very cheering, consolatory, and encouraging preachments and speechifications may be, in point of fact when tested by practice they are so much nonsense; because, although men and women may be universally constructed alike (each in their kind), the diversity of their qualities and qualifications is too evident to require a moment's consideration. We might seem to speak inviolably, if we instituted any comparison here between living people; and therefore we abstain. But take the whole course of natural history—is there anything like a republicanism in the construction of animals, touching their uses, their sagacity, their figures, their instinct? Is a toad the equal of a race-horse? Is a duck the peer of a lion? Is a worm the fellow of a greyhound? Wonderful as may be the formation of all these, or fifty other creatures, as applicable to the several purposes for the fulfilment of which they have been created, nobody can be found to deny the gradations of intellect (if intellect instinct may be called) which different animals of different genera and species are distinguished.

Now of the same genus were Mrs. Smylar and Miss Harris; but as to species, Mrs. Smylar was as the race-horse to the toad (had *they* been of the same genus); and while Miss Bruff's maid fancied that she saw through the designs of Mrs. Smylar, and felt assured that by taking the step upon which she had determined she could not only carry her point by damaging *her* with the colonel, but eventually secure an alliance with Mr. Rumfit, and necessarily attain a consequent establishment in the colonel's house, she was playing *Toady* at a wonderful disadvantage. Poor Miss Harris! little did *she* know the sort of person with whom she had to deal—little did *she* anticipate the results of her great political experiment.

Acting however upon the impulse—not of the moment merely—but upon the impulse given to her mind and feelings, after

some consideration, and after her disappointment at not receiving an encouraging answer, or indeed any answer at all, from Mrs. Smylar (whether she had got any letter from Mr. Rumfit, history tells us not), she sat down when her young lady was gone to dinner, and wrote to her master that which follows:—

“ Tuesday.

“ Sir,

“ I am sure you will forgive the very great liberty I take in venturing to write these few lines to you, which is a liberty nothing could induce me to take, but that I think it right you should know of some circumstances which you are not apprised of at present.

“ Nobody upon earth can be more attached to a mistress than I am to Miss Jane; I hope I have always shown it in all I have ever said or done, since I have lived with her; and there is not a sweeter-tempered, kinder-hearted young lady in the world, and I would die to serve her, which is the real cause of this letter.

“ I think it my duty, sir, to tell you, that Mr. Francis Grindle is expected here this evening; he was to have come yester'ay; and I am sure my young lady is in a state of great agitation about it, for, as it seems to me, Mr. and Mrs. Amersham are most anxious anxious for him to be here while Miss Jane is here, and she is, therefore, the more worried on that account.

“ Now, sir, although I would not for the world mean to say—and I am sure, sir, you will believe me—that Mr. and Mrs. Amersham wish to do any thing to disparage Miss Jane's intended husband in her eyes, by bringing Mr. Francis Grindle here, still having lived with her now for several years, I know enough of her to know that this meeting and their staying in the same house together, will be a great trial to her, and so I thought it my duty—and I hope to be forgiven for what I have done—to write and tell you the truth.

“ I have no motive, sir, and can have none, but acting for the best. I know that Miss Jane is good and excellent in every way, but from what she has said to me I humbly think she ought not to be placed in the situation in which she is, considering that it seems as if Mr. and Mrs. Amersham wished to set up Mr. Francis Grindle against his half-brother, and this seems to flurry my young lady; and therefore I have told you the truth, and beg and pray of you, sir, not to say one word about this letter, not to my young lady, *nor anybody else in the house*” (under-scored) “ for it would cause me great trouble if you did, and, as I have said before, I have no object but doing good, as a dutiful servant should do.”

“ I am, sir,

“ Yours most obediently,

“ EMILY HARRIS.”

This letter, carefully written, cautiously spelt, and clearly directed to the gallant colonel, in due course by that night's post,

reached Harley-street, and in less than ten minutes after its arrival was opened and read by Mrs. Smylar, who, taking into her kind consideration the advancing age and increasing infirmities of her respected and reputable master, felt it part of her duty to relieve him as much as possible from the trouble of poring over correspondence which she did not consider it necessary for him, at his time of life, to worry himself about.

What Mrs. Smylar's feelings towards her dear friend Miss Harris were, or what her resolutions as to her eventual destiny might be when she had read this "treacherous scrawl," it is quite impossible for us to say; but its contents decided her as to the course she was on the instant to pursue. That question was settled. The moment she saw the colonel she would open his eyes to what she thought the schemes of the Amershams. For although it was the scheme of all others which she wished to succeed, still if the colonel *was* to be made aware of it, she, and she only, was the person to warn him. And, so as it seems, the plot thickened.

Among the letters which arrived for Colonel Bruff, was one from Jane herself. That, however, the sacrilegious hands of Smylar dared not to touch. There *are* limits not to be passed, lines not to be transgressed. She certainly screwed it, and twisted it, and peeped into it, in hopes of getting something out of it, but in vain: and so it reached its destination.

Whether Miss Harris had also written to Rumfit, either through his club or down the "hairy," we are unable to say, but there can be no doubt that he appeared exceedingly fidgetty and nervous during the morning. Smylar was agitated. The least additional touch of rouge was considered necessary to enable her to meet the gaze of the colonel, and an extra bite of the lips to give them the ruddiness which the gallant and agreeable Behemoth was so frequently inclined to mar.

Smylar had unquestionably taken a deciding step in opening Miss Harris's letter, which it is quite needless to observe she meant to answer by return of post; but the restless manner of Mr. Rumfit, a sort of twiddle-finger kind of nervousness, somewhat worried her, as conveying to her mind the suggestion that Miss Harris had communicated to *him* her intention of addressing the colonel. Whereupon she (Smylar) was particularly desirous of opening her heart to her dear master, so that she might have ample time to reply—of course in *his* name—to the warning given by that prudent young person.

"Well, sir," said Smylar when she first saw the gallant animal, "have you heard from Miss Jane to-day?"

"Yes," said the colonel, "there's a letter from her. Haven't opened it. Conclude she's well, else she couldn't write."

"No, that's true," said Smylar, "but there may be news from Mrs. Amersham's which you ought to know; nay, colonel, there is news which you ought to know."

And here let

position at the moment our history has now reached. Driven to expose, for the sake of priority, a plan of Mrs. Amersham's, the entire success of which would have given her the greatest pleasure ; which she herself had been working, and which would, more than anything else in the world, tend to the accomplishment of the object she had in view. Such is the force of circumstances.

"What news?" said Bruff. "News from Jane, eh?"

"Yes," said Smylar ; "there may be visitors there, whose presence is not desirable."

"Can't see who—what?" said the colonel.

"Why suppose," said Smylar, "Mr. Francis Grindle should be on a visit there—what then?"

"Eh?" exclaimed the colonel ; "what the canter, the saint, the butterfly-hunter, the frog-catcher?"

"Why," said the lady, biting her lips to give them a tint, "it may be so ; and it may be that your friends the Amershams think *that* the better match of the two."

"That'll do, said the colonel. "Can't make you out. One day the Amershams are all for one match, another day for another match, as you say. What can they care about it, eh? Why should they worry themselves to shuffle about and whiffle like weathercocks?"

"Oh," said Smylar, "if you are unreasonable enough to expect people to give *you* reasons for their conduct, I really can't help you. All I know is—and I feel it my duty to tell you, for nobody else will—that this fascinating Mr. Frank Grindle is domesticated with your daughter, while she is under an engagement to be married to his half-brother, who is not admitted into her society. Now," added she emphatically and theatrically, "that's the fact, and what do you think of it?"

"Think!" said Bruff, looking as if he really were capable of thinking, "why upon my life I don't know. Jane told me two or three days ago, that the Amershams had got acquainted with this spider-hunter at Broadstairs, but I never troubled my head about that. As I said to Lady Gramm, Jane is to be married this day three weeks—what else does it matter!"

"Oh," said Smylar, contracting her well-corked eyebrows, "you make Lady Gramm a *confidante* in your family matters. Is that prudent, colonel, recollecting all that has been said of her early life?"

This Mrs. Smylar, who knew nothing whatever of Lady Gramm, except perhaps through some lying, libellous publication, thought was a hard hit, which might be useful in the prosecution of her own project.

"I don't know what you mean by *confidante*," said Bruff, "because I don't know the language ; but she takes an interest in my affairs."

"Yes," interrupted Smylar, who could not get rid of her habit of mingling jest with her satire ; the true honey and gall of the

provincial *coulisse*, "and would take the principal too if she could. I speak as I feel. Lady Gramm probably has objects in anticipation which of course I have not. *My* views are genuine and straightforward, and what *I* say *I* say with no feeling but for *your* good, and that of your dear child."

"That'll do," said Bruff, "that'll do. I am satisfied of that. Eh, what, Smylar—crying? Come, come, that's nonsense, crying will spoil your complexion."

Many true words are spoken in jest, and most assuredly Smylar's tears would have done serious damage to the beautiful glow on her countenance—the roses on her cheeks were not likely to flourish by watering. However, she was quite mistress of her art, and the two little pin's-heads which she crocodiled out, rested upon the lower lashes of her eyes, and there maintained their station, aided by the *crèmes* and *pomades* which are so earnestly recommended to ladies *en décadence*.

"I say, 'colonel,'" emphatically proceeded Mrs. Smylar, wiping away the drops, "that I feel it my duty to tell you what is going on. If I have behaved wrongly—if I have outstepped that duty—send me away. Heaven knows," and then came a throw-up of the orbs, "what my intentions are, and—"

"There, there," said the colonel, "that'll do. Now, then, sit down—don't hurry yourself. What d'ye mean?—explain. Is this Frank brought down there to supplant George, and these people privy to it?—is that what you mean?"

"That is it," said Smylar, "and the instant it came to my knowledge I resolved that you should hear of it."

"That'll do," said the colonel, "what's best to be done? I won't stand this. You have puzzled me about these Amer-shams, I tell you; but what do you know? that's the point. I don't ask *how* you know it, but *what do you know?*"

"Why," said Smylar, with one of her best low comedy *soubrette* leers, "I do know, and I made it a point to know, because I knew more before; in fact, colonel, it's a plan; how managed I don't pretend to guess, but so it is; and what the *dénouement*, as we used to say at Bullock's-smithy, may be, I of course, not being behind the scenes, cannot pretend to guess. Still that is my view of the plot; and if I have done wrong in telling you, as I said before, treat me as I deserve."

"But," said the colonel, "let's see what Jane herself says; for, as I told you, I have not opened her letter."

"That," said Smylar, "will settle the affair."

"Here," said the colonel, "read it to me. It will save my eyes, or rather my glasses. As Lady Gramm says, I have over-worked my sight."

Smylar proceeded to open the letter from Jane, and read thus:

"My dearest Father,

"Tuesday.

"The kindness of our dear friends the Amershams has, as

usual, been unmitigated—their hospitality and friendship are unbounded, and in my present peculiar position nothing can exceed Emma's tenderness towards me, or her good-hearted husband's anxiety to render me perfectly comfortable.

"There is nobody staying here but Lady Cramly and her daughter—a remarkably nice, quiet, yet highly accomplished girl. Her mother has travelled a great deal, and like great travellers, I believe, has seen a great deal—she is, however, exceedingly clever, and wonderfully amusing to a quiet body like me.

"I have heard from both Sir George Grindle and his son, who seem to threaten a visit here. I have no doubt the Amershams would give them a kind reception; and what renders the coincidence curious, they have invited Mr. Francis Grindle here, with whom, as I told you, they became acquainted during his uncle's illness at Broadstairs.

"I shall be very glad to improve my acquaintance with him who is destined so soon to become a near connexion of ours; but it is odd enough that the Amershams should have made a friendship with him without even knowing, or at least thinking at the time they were first introduced, that he was destined to be my brother-in-law.

I have told you that I have heard from George Grindle; I have not answered his letter, for it leaves me in doubt whether he and his father will remain at Brighton long enough to receive it. Lady Gramm has written to me very kindly, and tells me that you seem to enjoy her little quiet *rénunions*. I have heard her say that London, in what they call the dull season of the year, is to *her* most agreeable.

"Our weather here is charming; but of course my mind is not quite at ease, although dear Emma is a great comfort to me, for I almost feel—not that I am very superstitious—that the death of Mr. Leeson has somehow sadly altered the previously settled arrangements.

"Believe me, dearest father,

"Yours affectionately,

"JANE BRUFF."

Now, with the exception of the last two lines of this letter, there was not one syllable calculated to serve the purposes of either Smylar or Harris. Jane's openness of heart, and sincerity of character, told her father as mere matter of fact, that which these two plotters and counter-plotters were hatching as something of the most vital importance.

Smylar was dead-beaten by the straightforwardness of the letter. All the credit she had taken to herself for finding out the juxtaposition of Jane and Francis was gone at a blow; and her exploit of opening Harris's exceedingly cunning epistle, recoiled most bitterly upon herself; for as it is evident, had she

done no such thing, but permitted that letter to reach the colonel's hand, the candid and undisguised statement of his daughter would have entirely demolished the fruits of Harris's vigilance and activity; whereas now, she had to fight the battle with Harris, and bear the blame herself. Therefore was it necessary for her—if she could manage it—to do something else, which, simply arising out of the actual state of affairs, might if possible, attract or drive the colonel away from the parties at my Lady Gramm's—his admiration of which was her horror; for besides diverting him from her society, they kept him so exceedingly sober, that when he *did* come home, the warmth of his friendship and the ardour of his esteem did by no means resemble that which they had been before he had addicted himself to her *soirées*.

"Well, colonel," said she after he had read the letter, "I confess I do not see why Mr. Francis Grindle, who is more nearly connected with Mr. Leeson than either his father or his half-brother, is to be permitted to go about and visit—and especially visit Miss Jane—while Sir George and her intended husband are shut up moping and mumping. If I were you, I would go down to the Amershams' myself—why should you not?—they are old friends, connexions—I would; and as you say I give you one account of them at one time, and another account at another, go—see—and judge for yourself: that's my advice."

"Is it?" said the colonel; and he began to look as people who have intellects look, when they begin to consider—"there's reason in that, there is; but you see the girl writes the truth."

"It isn't the girl," said Smylar, "as you call her—there's no fear of *her*; but mind the people with whom she is living. Now, what do you think of doing this, colonel?—what do you think of writing to Sir George? What I want, as you must know, is that every thing should turn out well. Suppose you go this afternoon to the Amershams', and see yourself what is going on."

"I haven't been there for I don't know how long," said the colonel.

"The happier they will be to see you," said Smylar.

"But I promised Lady Gramm," said the colonel, "to go this evening to see a man eat fireworks, or something, and I can't—"

"Yes, colonel, you can," said Smylar, looking at him in a way for which no half-price is admitted; "consider your daughter's happiness—your own peace of mind—never mind the fireworks—I know enough of those sort of things."

"That'll do," said the colonel. "I'll go—by Jove you are a treasure to me; to think now how you found this out—before Jenny wrote to—"

"That's it," said Smyla; "and now, colonel—all I depend upon is, that you will ask no questions at the Amershams' of any body, nor suffer any body to speak to you on the subject. There you will go—there you will catch this designing Mr. Francis,

with all his mock grief, insinuating himself into Miss Jane's good graces, and then you will appreciate the friendship of the Amershams, and the little service I may have done to you."

"But I'll shoot Amersham," said Bruff, "if I find he is in the conspiracy; what, d'ye think that he—"

"I think nothing," said Smylar; "go, my dear colonel—keep your own counsel, and speak to nobody on *the* subject; you are come down to see your daughter, and there's an end;—only mark, let the affair turn out as it will, my anxiety is that your views and wishes should not be frustrated."

Knowing the influence which Mr. Smylar really did possess over the gallant jolter-head, there can be little doubt of her success in persuading him to follow her advice, which advice had, as is obvious, the double object of exciting, as she hoped, a quarrel with his daughter (an almost natural result of their meeting), and of withdrawing him from the fascinations of Lady Gramm's strong coffee and dimly-lighted boudoir. He decided upon going: and now came another difficulty. In the ordinary course of things, he would have taken Mr. Rumfit as his servant; but Smylar could not permit of any interview between that person and Miss Harris under the circumstances. She therefore reminded the full-sized dolt that could go by the railroad, as the station was not more than eight miles, or some such thing, from Amersham's house (which was about half the distance it was from London), and that the groom could take his portmanteau, dressing-case, and bag: and that Simmons *was* there, and could dress him, and that Rumfit was a safeguard to the house;—all of which she urged with so much energy and anxiety, that any body who did not know the passionless coldness of her heart, and the grovelling calculativeness of her mind, would have fancied she had some very strong reason for wishing Mr. Rumfit to stay where he was. Not a bit of it: to prevent his *going* was the object, and having achieved that, she cared for nothing else; and consummated her performance of the day by writing the following note to her dear friend Miss Harris:—

"The colonel begs you will take no notice to *him*, nor any body else, of what you wrote to him. He will be down before this post comes in. He thanks you."

This written in a disguised hand, was sealed and despatched. The colonel himself, locked up in an iron hearse on the railroad, was destined to hit his mark, as far as he was concerned, by eight or nine miles. Mrs. Smylar suggested to Mr. Rumfit the agreeableness of having some cake and wine in her room, previously to a little bit of supper which she ordered to be ready at ten o'clock, during and after which she rallied him agreeably upon his affection for Emily Harris, who to *her* thinking "was one of the nicest girls she had ever seen."

At Amersham's matters were going on rather dimerently. There, in the usual routine of things, the trap in which Colonel Bruff by his forced march was to catch his daughter and Francis was all ready for his closing; and certainly his arrival, in a rickety sort of unglazed omnibus, drawn by one wretched pony—the omnibus, odd enough to say, being scarcely large enough to hold the colonel only, and being, moreover, called the Apollo, and which had, by dint of the last energies of the wretched animal that dragged it from the railway-station, brought him to Amersham's in little less than two hours more than would have been expended if he had put himself behind a pair of Newman's posters in one of his currant-coloured chaises—startled Mrs. Amersham, Jane, and my Lady Cramly, and her daughter. The two last knew nothing of the colonel, except that when he was announced by the same name as Jane, they concluded he was her father. Jane had not, of course, the remotest notion of seeing him there, and Mrs. Amersham, to whom he had never paid the civility of even a morning visit for years, felt almost frightened at his approach.

"My dear father!" said Jane, running to meet him as he entered the room, "what has happened?"

"Nothing," said the colonel, "nothing has happened; only as I was making a little excursion, I resolved, as my course of travelling would bring me within a mile or two of you, just to look in upon you; eh? that's all, dear."

Now Jane knew enough of her father to know that so far from that being all, it had nothing whatever to do with the matter; and Mrs. Amersham having exchanged looks with her astonished friend, they tacitly agreed that, to use a colloquial phrase, and one which perhaps they would not have used, there was "something in the wind."

"How's Amersham?" said the colonel, his eye wandering about in search of his host.

"He is not at home," answered Mrs. Amersham, "but he will be here shortly. Do you know Lady Cramly and Miss Cramly?" added the graceful mistress of the house.

The colonel telegraphed the "negative," and was forthwith presented in due form. Lady Cramly was particularly amiable in her way, and poor Seraphine was really so; but still Bruff felt rather uneasy at finding neither Amersham nor Frank of the party, and still more uneasy because he did not exactly know how to inquire about the destination of his host, or the absence of his friend, without disclosing more of the object of his visit than he considered it either necessary or judicious just at that period to develop.

"You came by the railroad, colonel," said Lady Cramly; "delightful conveyance!"

"Can't say I think so, my lady," said Bruff. "Didn't see the beauties of it."

"Seraphine my daughter," said Lady Cramly, "and I, have travelled a vast many miles by it—thousands I may say—and we were never in the slightest degree inconvenienced. To be sure the people knew us, and every accommodation was afforded us; but besides that there is a sensation—a sort of feeling not only of certainty of achieving your object in a journey, but doing it with all its rapidity, without fatigue. I think it exceedingly—exceeding—"

"There's a good deal of noise about it," said Bruff.

"Yes," said the lady, "there is noise—"

"And smell."

"Yes," said Lady Cramly, "and smell, I admit."

"And you have no great opportunity of seeing the country as you pass through it," said the colonel.

"Oh dear no," said Lady Cramly. "I never venture to look out. The dear duke—Seraphine's godfather, who first induced me to go in one of them, told me never to look out."

"That'll do, my lady," said the colonel. "I think in future I shall stick to the old mode of going, if I can."

And then followed the usual common-place sort of discussion, and declaration that the attempt to travel by our universally acknowledged admirable roads would be wholly fruitless—that all our excellent inns, together with the once wealthy and respectable towns in which they stood, would be deserted, and the population of the empire would be dragged through noxious tunnels, or over perilous ridges, across lines of country so remote from civilization and society, that in case of accident or delay they would find themselves alone and helpless even in the middle of the day, and if visited with any one of the numerous calamities by which this new-fangled mode of travelling is so pre-eminently distinguished, driven to avail themselves of the aid of a switch-guarding watchman, or the doubtful accommodation of a station-house stretcher.

In this conversation Bruff continued to join, occasionally talking to his daughter in broken sentences, evidently wishing to say more than he well could "before company," and not desiring to take her out to a private conference, because, as far as every thing presented itself to his eyes, there could be no need of anything like remonstrance or scolding; and if there were not, he had no need of talking to her: and so the Behemoth went on wondering why Smylar should have led him into a scrape out of which he did not at all see how he could get. At last he ventured to inquire when Amersham was expected back.

"Oh, before supper," said Emma; "our old-fashioned meal; he is gone on a visit of good-nature to a future connexion of yours. Don't blush, my dear Jane. Poor Mr. Frank Grindle, whom we expected here, sent him word that he was exceedingly ill, and could not come over to us; and my good man—who is one of man—went over to see him this morning, for he is alone

with his *homme d'affaires*, settling his late uncle's estates, and all that; and he thought he might perhaps be useful to him, if not in business, at least in diverting his mind while he was an invalid."

"So," thought Bruff, "then the man has never been here after all. Smylar's a fool; and I am dragged away from the *soirée* of Lady Gramm."

"Grindlc," said Lady Cramly, "where do I know the name of Grindle? I know it from the famous cough-drops made by that admirable chemist in Pall-mall; but there is a Sir George Grindle, isn't there? Oh yes, the father of your friend, true."

Jane felt herself much as Saint Lawrence must have felt in the early stage of his martyrdom.

"Don't you recollect, Scraphine," continued the voluble lady, "our seeing that pretty creature at Versailles—Mrs. Grindle? She was the daughter-in-law of Sir Somebody Grindle; was that Sir George?"

"I don't recollect, Ma'," said Scraphine.

Bruff knew enough of the affair of the *nominal* Mrs. Grindle, coupled with the locality, to be rather anxious to change the subject of conversation. "So," thought he to himself, "Mr. George has carried the matter with a high hand indeed;" and Jane, in her placid way, cast her mild yet intelligent eyes upon papa, in order to ascertain if he were at all affected by that which, in her mind, was all at once associated with the brief tour made by her intended husband on the continent.

"She was exceedingly nice and *naïve*," said Lady Cramly. "I think it was the Prince de Joinville who pointed her out to me one night at the Tuilleries. She came to Paris with—I forget who—Scraphine, do you recollect? I believe I got her the invitation. She was so exceedingly genteel. Oh! the nicest creature I ever saw, except the Duchess de Débonnaire—my greatest pet. We were only at Versailles one day, but this dear little half-English, half-French woman quite won my heart."

"Nice company you must keep," thought Bruff, being perfectly well satisfied of the identity of the person; and not knowing the extent of the discursiveness of Lady Cramly's fancy, he began to consider as much as he could as to the character of the court of the Citizen King.

"Large fortune, I am told," said Bruff, rather wishing to change the topic of conversation, "Frank gets by his uncle's death?"

"Very considerable indeed," said Mrs. Amersham, "and he is such a delightful person—"

"Ah, that'll do," said Bruff. "I know very little of him. We have seen him once or twice, haven't we Jane?"

"Twice or three times," answered Jane.

"Have you heard from George to-day, Jenny?" said the colonel.

"No, sir," said Jane.

The question and answer appeared to be leading the conversation into what might be considered family topics, and a subsequent exchange of looks between Lady Cramly and Mrs. Amersham indicated the propriety of leaving the colonel and his daughter *tête-à-tête*—the thing of all others Jane would have given the world to avoid. Still his unusual and unexpected visit in itself implied something—what, Mrs. Amersham could not comprehend, nor could Jane.

"I hope," said the lady of the house, "that you mean—now we *have got you here*—to stay some time with us."

"Why," said Bruff, looking exceedingly awkward, and as if he devoutly wished he never had come, "if I bore you with my society till to-morrow after breakfast, I am afraid I must not indulge myself any longer. I must be in town by three or four."

Simultaneously Jane, Emma, Lady Cramly, and her daughter, all thought in various and different degrees of energy—"Why did you come?"

We happen to know: and we happen to know also, that he came charged with all the powder—or rather power—of his paternal violence, to fulminate his rage upon his poor innocent daughter, for encouraging the advances, or rather enjoying the society, of Mr. Francis Grindle. His officious counsellors had been overreached, and here he was—of course welcomed in a house, under the roof of which his only daughter was an inmate; but a visit of *his* being so unusual, its effect was proportionably remarkable, its object and intention turning out complete failures. All he wished or cared for was the return of Amersham, as the first step in his progress to his bedroom, in which, whether with or without supper, he devoutly wished himself.

"Jane, dear," said Mrs. Amersham, "I have no doubt you and papa have fifty things to talk over, so go your ways; you will find the little octagon room lighted and quite at your service. Amersham won't be long now, so you had better lose no time, as the colonel seems obliged to leave us to-morrow."

Bruff had nothing to say to his daughter—Jane had nothing to say to her father; but the common observances of society rendered their availing themselves of Mrs. Amersham's proposal a matter almost of necessity, and so they did retire to talk over family concerns; a move which gave very great relief to Bruff, who, as we have before remarked, found himself in a false position.

"A very fine-looking man, Colonel Buff," said Lady Cramly.

"Bruff," said Emma.

"Bruff—yes, Bruff; I beg pardon," said her ladyship, "He reminds me very much of Prince Vildovontdozich—you remember *him*, Seraphine? He was an ill-used man, as I fancied, and I told the Emperor of Austria that he ought to do something

for him. The very next week, he ordered Metternich to make him—I forget at the moment what—either a field-marshal or an archbishop. Do you recollect, child, which?"

"No, Ma'," said Seraphine.

"I have got it down in my diary," said Lady Cramly, "I never saw a greater likeness—if he had but mustachios, it would be perfect."

"But," said Emma, "do Archbishops in Austria wear mustachios?"

"It depends entirely upon the particular regulations of the different chapters," said Lady Cramly. "The exalted aristocracy with which Seraphine and I exclusively lived, do I believe exactly as they please; at least *M.* seemed to think so. Seraphine, you know whom I mean by *M.*?"

"Yes, Ma'," said Seraphine.

"But," said Emma, "what Mrs. Grindle was that which you saw in France?"

"Oh, such a love of a creature!" said the enthusiastic traveller; "so pretty, and so clever, and so nice; you can quite imagine a pretty dear English thing with nice French manners. Who first presented her to me, Seraphine?—wasn't it the Duc de Falderall?"

"No, Ma'," said Seraphine; "we first met her in a shoemaker's shop in the Rue Richelieu."

"Stuff! my dear child," said her mamma, "I am talking of Versailles, where she was living with her mother. I quite forgot at the moment, but I am almost sure it was the Duc de Falderall."

"And what did she call herself?" said Emma.

"Mrs. Grindle," replied Lady Cramly, daughter-in-law of a baronet here. Of course living in the society I always do, and treated with the distinction not only due to my personal rank but my literary character, I live with none but the best of people; and I tell you what, my dear Mrs. Amersham—when a woman like me has got a name, and is able to represent the real state of great nations from the highest authority, and upon the best information, she becomes both loved and feared, according to the parties in which she mingles. Rely upon it, that my next work will far exceed my first. When that was published, my poor dear Sir Ferdinand was alive, and he checked my ardour, and what he called 'toned down' my pictures of foreign courts. Now I am left alone, I will prove to the world how well I deserve the honours, distinctions, and decorations which have been showered upon me."

"I have no doubt of *that*, my dear Lady Cramly," said Emma; "but I am exceedingly anxious to know, if you have not been somehow imposed upon by this fascinating young lady, whom, as Seraphine says, you met in the shoemaker's shop."

"Imposed upon!" said Lady Cramly; "I imposed upon in a

foreign capital!—My dear Mrs. Amersham, do you imagine, with the resources I possess, the position I hold, and the credentials I command, that I can be imposed upon? I certainly may have confused myself about presenting the dear interesting creature to my gracious friend Phil at the Tuileries; but I cannot mistake her presentation to *me* by the Duc de Falderall.—You are *so* stupid, Seraphine, dear—you never recollect any thing;—and yet,” added she, turning to Mrs. Amersham, “the men think her so wonderfully clever.”

“I perfectly recollect,” said Seraphine, “two or three days before we left Paris, an extremely pretty woman, with a lady who seemed to be her mother, coming into a shoemaker’s shop where we were, in the Rue Richelieu, and you made a sort of acquaintance with her. I liked her—you found out her name, and the day before we actually did leave Paris we went to Versailles, and there we met her in the gardens, and you renewed your acquaintance with her, and we walked together.”

“Yes, child,” cried Lady Cramly, “but the Duc de Falderall—”

“Was walking with us also,” said Seraphine; “you had just been introduced to him by Monsieur Le Snob, a sous-lieutenant in his regiment, who had got us leave to see the grand Ircanor, and—”

“Oh child, child, you have no memory at all, said Lady Cramly; “you have forgotten all the circumstances—all the names, and all the localities—that is the advantage of keeping a diary.”

Just at this period, the large and disagreeable colonel, having had his “say” out with his daughter, with whom, as it grieved him to think, he could find no particular fault, returned with her to the drawing-room, Jane wearing on her usually placid brow a somewhat anxious and nervous contraction. Her eyes rested on those of Emma.

The colonel seemed resolved to be good-humoured. He knew that he was well housed for the night, and although he might to a certain extent be beaten as to the object of his visit, its result proved that he had no real reason for alarm; and so he came into the *salon* rubbing his great hands joyously, and was received cordially by his hostess. Whereupon he began to talk big and loud, and feel himself at home, and would perhaps have pursued that course some time longer, had not the ringing of bells, and the barking of dogs, announced the arrival of the master of the house.

Welcome to his own hearth and home was Amersham, as such a man must be. He certainly started at seeing the colonel—however, he was “too happy;” and so, as soon as possible, the customary supper was announced, and without the waste of many previous words, the party were seated.

As they were going to this social and sociable meal, Jane laid her hand upon Emma’s arm—bringing to mind something which

Smylar once had said with regard to George Grindle's dissolute conduct—and whispered,

“Emma, what does that woman mean about the lady from Versailles?”

“Mean!” said Emma, bursting into a fit of laughter, “who can tell *what* she means? she never spoke one word of truth in the whole course of her life!”

But where *was* Mr. Francis Grindle? *How* was he? and why was he not there?

CHAPTER XVII.

THE questions with which our last chapter closes were precisely those which Colonel Bruff most particularly desired to ask his host, inasmuch as besides having taken the trouble—for pleasure to him it certainly was none—to pay the Amershams a visit, in order to find something out, which it evidently appeared did not exist, he had also written to Sir George, and his hopeful son at Brighton, detailing his intentions, and moreover giving his reasons for putting them into execution; so that as it appeared to him at the moment, he had not only made himself a fool on the main point, but had exerted his energies in order to record his folly, by communicating to the Grindles the object of his rural excursion.

And now, where *was* Frank Grindle? and why was he *not* where he had been invited and was expected?

Annoyed by his absence, and alarmed by his silence, Amersham had, as we know, resolved to visit him, in order to offer him assistance, advice, or consolation, whichever he might appear to require. He went, and found him perfectly well in health, although certainly not in spirits, and on the very point of writing him a letter marked “*private and confidential*,” the contents of which, however, in consequence of his arrival, were thrown into the form of conversation.

“My letter,” said Frank, “would have explained to you the difficulties by which I am assailed; and although delighted to see you here, and most grateful for your considerate attentions, I think I could have expressed myself better in writing than in words, because what I have to say involves, as I feel, something exceedingly like an imputation of vanity, which I most earnestly and anxiously should wish to avoid. However, since you *are* here, you shall know my feelings, and of course my intentions.”

“I think,” said Amersham, “as to the imputation of vanity, you may set your heart at rest; for let your determination be based on what it *may*, I will stake my existence that vanity has no share in the decision.”

"Well then," said Frank Grindle, "if you give me as much credit for the absence of vanity as I give *you* credit for sincerity, I will explain to you briefly and concisely the cause of my absence from your house. The fact is simply and plainly this: you have, as you told me in your hospitable invitation, a young lady staying with you who is engaged to my brother."

"Well," interrupted Amersham, "that was the very reason I expected you. In families—"

"Families," again interrupted Frank; "I anticipate what you are going to say; but such families as ours, my dear Mr. Amersham, are luckily not often to be found. Every action of my life, even from my earliest youth, has been misjudged by my father, and misrepresented by others of my connexions. In short, I will be candid and plain with you at once: such is the spirit of opposition which exists towards me, that although—and this is the point upon which I feel it difficult to touch—I have not seen my future sister-in-law, Miss Bruff, more than three or four times, I am convinced that my going to you while she is your guest, would be construed into an attempt to thwart the views of my father and brother, and to secure her affections for myself; although I do assure you that—"

"I want no further confidence," said Amersham; "I see the position in which you feel yourself placed, and even although the circumstance deprives us of the pleasure of receiving you, I am not sorry, since such are your feelings, that I mentioned her being with us. She is, as we have known for many years, a most delightful person."

"The extent of my wishes," said Francis—not, however, that the expression of his countenance altogether verified his admission,—“is, that she may be happy with my half-brother. He is clever, gay, popular, and dissipated; but I do fear that for domestic happiness he is not entirely calculated. However, as I am not going to *you*, I propose to-morrow starting to my father at Brighton, where, as of course you know, he and George are staying. I will once more tender the olive-branch, and endeavour, now that I am actually in possession of a much larger fortune than I ever coveted, to see if I can convince them of the sincerity of my affection, and as regards my father, the perfect feeling of duty which I owe him. I admit that neither the pursuits nor associations in which *they* delight are compatible with my feelings—not only of propriety, for I am no preacher—but with my ideas of rational comfort or reasonable pleasure. I have been trained in a different school, and, to what they consider my shame, am of a domestic turn. I love science and the arts, and esteem all those who are eminent in them, and find delight in the society of those who have the means and inclination to enjoy and encourage them. Such feelings lead me into totally different circles of society from those in which they move; and hence, for no reason which can be reasonably ad-

duced, I am denounced as a rebel, and an oponent to all their wishes. Not I;—all I ask is, let *me* go my own way, having not the slightest inclination to interfere with theirs. Hence have arisen our differences, I believe; and, as I tell you, if I ever venture to remonstrate—which is the ‘very head and front of my offending’—upon the language in which George is in the habit of indulging, my presumption is treasonable. Thus, my dear Mr. Amersham, I have for some time past considered it wiser and better, and even more dutiful, to deny myself that which, under any other circumstances, would be my greatest pleasure—a constant intercourse with my nearest and—if they would let me so feel them—my dearest relations.”

Amersham, who, although he had spoken much and frequently with Francis Grindle on the subject of the peculiarity of his position regarding his family during the illness of his uncle Mr. Leeson, at Broadstairs, had never brought him to particulars, saw at once the delicacy of his situation; but at the same moment he coupled in his mind with that delicacy a suspicion that, however gently he touched, or rather however scrupulously he avoided the point, he was not entirely unconscious of a preference in his favour, exhibited by Jane Bruff upon the three or four occasions of their meeting. What Mrs. Amersham suspected as to that feeling, we need not repeat; nor perhaps had she even confided her suspicions to her amiable husband: certain however it is, that he left Francis Grindle to return home under the impression that *he*, Francis Grindle, did feel that he *was* preferred by her before his half-brother; and hence the conduct he pursued. He admired—as who would not?—the sweet, the gentle Jane. The softness of her manner, the total absence of artificiality, the kind consideration which marked every action of her life, the combination of attractions to which we have long since despaired of doing justice, had, such is the truth, won his heart; the struggle was to be made—he made it, and succeeded—and that, too, while taking much less credit with Amersham for his conduct than it merited.

So then *they* parted; Amersham returned home, and the next morning Frank proceeded to Brighton, on a visit to his father and brother; a proceeding which most unintentionally and inadvertently added considerably to the discomfiture of the gallant and disagreeable Colonel Bruff, who, not satisfied by simply availing himself of the news as to where a mare’s-nest was to be discovered, communicated to him through the activity of Miss Harris and the ingenuousness of Mrs. Smylar, had written off to Sir George Grindle all the particulars of Frank’s undermining visit to the Amershams’, and of his surprising activity in making a forced march to circumvent him.

So when during the evening Mr. Amersham mentioned the course which Frank Grindle had adopted, the gallant colonel, generally impenetrable to any thing like a consciousness of his

own stupidity, felt exceedingly vexed and much mortified, and wished himself, with all his heart and soul, in the muslin-hung, pink-lighted boudoir of the verdant, yet venerable Lady Gramm.

But more embarrassments awaited the gallant and disagreeable colonel, consequent upon his needless expedition. His departure before breakfast on the following morning was imperatively interdicted by the host and hostess, and their commands were earnestly followed up by the supplications of his daughter, whose depression of spirits was the subject of general—if silent—remark, the cause of which, Mrs. Amersham suspected to be neither more nor less than the defection of Frank Grindle. Perhaps upon this particular occasion Mrs. Amersham was not very far from sympathizing with her volatile husband. No matter: whatever really *was* the cause, the effect was unquestionable.

During the remainder of the evening it seemed as if the voice of Lady Cramly grated harshly upon Jane's ears; and yet she listened to what she rattled forth with a marked interest; she turned her mild yet radiant eyes upon Seraphine as if appealingly. But what had struck deep into her heart through her ears, was what had been said by the flippant, slighty dowager, which had passed away from the gay old body's recollection, and in the midst of the whirl and rattle of her untiring tongue, she never for a moment imagined that one of her off-hand diary dashes had completely beaten down poor Jane.

From the moment that the well gotten-up fibber, the lady tourist, spoke of the Mrs. Grindle whom she had seen in Paris, Jane's spirits sank. As we have already said, she coupled the fact—for she was too well-bred to doubt Lady Cramly, whatever her intimate friends might do—with one of Smylar's hints as to some sort of connexion of George Grindle's; and she determined, as her father *had* come to visit them, that before he quitted the house she would endeavour to comprehend, if possible, the meaning of the lady's history; because, true or not true, she had stated that there *was* a Mrs. Grindle, a beautiful person, the daughter-in-law of a baronet. It was true at all events, that there was but one baronet of that name; and if Lady Cramly's history was not the truth, what *was*?

It was in vain, later in the evening—indeed, just before they started for the night—that Emma again endeavoured to persuade Jane to put no faith in any thing the accomplished tourist said. Jane was resolved to speak to her father on the subject, inasmuch as although Lady Cramly certainly had flourished off the beautiful creature at the Tuilleries, associated with princes, and “all that,” the name was admitted to be correct, even by Seraphine, although the *reue* was laid by *her* in a shoemaker's-shop. However, upon further questioning in the morning, Seraphine honestly admitted, that not being a tourist, and not keeping a

diary, she certainly, as far as she was concerned, knew nothing of her own knowledge of the fact. She remembered an exceedingly pretty young woman, with a companion who appeared like her mother; and that after they left the shop, her mamma, the tourist, took up a small packet of shoes, which was directed for them to be subsequently called for, and read the address; but as for herself, having no ulterior views of astounding the literary world, she took no notice of the parcel, nor did she know what name was on it, nor did she—this was said more cautiously than reverently—believe that her mamma knew any more than *she* did.

Still, however, the impression had been made upon the mind of Jane, and there it remained, as did equally the determination to communicate that which she had heard to her father in the morning. She was quite aware of the difficulty of the task she had to perform, and proportionably prepared for the irritation and anger to which her even touching upon the subject would expose her. But Smylar's words still rang in her ears, and the knowing leer of her eyes yet glared upon her as she recollects—which she could not help doing—the remark she made as to the cruelty which her young lady's marrying George would inflict upon somebody; and so her young lady's resolution was not to be shaken.

And while all this was passing in her mind, Frank Grindle was being conveyed to the temporary home of his parent and brother-in-law; and in order to render the results of old booby Bruff's manœuvres the more completely absurd, he arrived on his filial visit at Brighton about three-quarters of an hour before Sir George and young Hopeful were about to start for Amersham's, in order to frustrate his underhanded schemes of treachery.

"Hey!" said Sir George. "What, Master Frank, *you* here?—What, cut across the country from the Amershams'? How are they?—how's your sister-in-law as is to be?"

"I should be glad to tell you, my dear father," said Frank, "but I have not been there, nor have I had any intention of going there."

"O, come, I say," said George. "you *are* going it Frank. Well, how are you?"

"I merely repeat, my dear George," said Frank, "that I have not been at Mr. Amersham's since the funeral of my poor uncle, although he was good enough to press me to go over."

The father and son exchanged looks, and the son winked.

"Poor uncle!" said the son, "rich you mean. Well, but I say, we're dounced glad to see you—arn't we, governor?"

"I am," said Sir George. "Give us your hand, my boy; I wish you joy of your succession."

"I assure you," said Frank, "it is more than counterbalanced by the loss I have sustained."

"Tumty, tumty, ti!" said George; "that won't do. No; an uncle is an uncommonly interesting kind of codgering relation—but stumpy *is* stumpy."

"I look at it, George," said Frank, "with comparative indifference. If it affords me the opportunity of extending my sphere of usefulness, I shall rejoice, but else—"

"Else!" interrupted the baronet, "extend your sphere of usefulness!—hang it, you may *do that* forthwith: charity begins at home—I'm stumped—so is George—nothing but the girl—the—what do you call her, George? Jenny Jonkanoo—nothing else will; and as we hear she is all over head and ears in love with *you*, why we were in a considerable stew when we heard you were gone to meet her."

"I had no intention of doing so," said Frank. "Her father, I hear, is at Amersham's."

"Yes," said Sir George, looking at his son.

"Ye—es," replied the son, drawlingly; "and a pretty sort of a donkey *he* is."

This was the sort of family conversation, from which poor Frank's feelings always revolted. It was carried on in the usual tone. Here was a man, disagreeable and stupid enough, as we have already seen; but standing in a position relating to *them*, which ought, even in decency, to have secured him from such remarks. What must he have experienced as they proceeded, and Sir George said,

"Well, how did the funeral go off?"

"Sir?" said Frank.

"The funeral," said Sir George; "I should have been glad to have gone to it, and so would George, only it is so like humbug—weeping for a chap one doesn't care for. All smart, I suppose, and well got up."

"Indeed," said Frank, "my feelings were too much and too deeply interested in the—"

"O dear, dear," said George, affecting to cry; I'm quite upset; ring the bell, governor—let's have some soda-water and brandy to brace us up."

Frank said no more; his treatment by his father and brother was as it always had been, and he now almost repented that he had been voluntarily subjected to what could only be felt by himself, and considered by others, as outrages of the coarsest nature upon his duty and affection.

"But without joking"—said Sir George.

"My dear father," said Frank, "I am in no humour for joking. Meaning to go over to France for a week or two, I thought I would take my departure from Brighton, in order to give myself the opportunity of seeing you, and of assuring you and George that the great object of my life will be to prove to you how truly and sincerely I admit and feel my duty to my parent, and how glad I shall be at all times throughout my life

to prove an affection, which it is the greatest pain of my existence to believe has been doubted."

"Well said, parson!" cried Sir George.

"Amen," said his son. "Here comes the soda-water, and I'll tell you what, Frank, if you want to show your affection to *me*, fork out a bit. You were always a steady goer—five per cent satisfy you, eh?—try eight rather than not please you. Five thousand is all I want till after the girl and I are settled; and I can hand you over a policy on the governor's life for the amount."

"Indeed, George," said Frank, "this is exceedingly painful, and—"

"Take it easy, young man," said George, "you can't lay out your money to better advantage; can he, governor?"

"I think not," said Sir George.

"I assure you I know nothing about the property to which I have succeeded," said Frank, "nor at this moment do I care."

"Then you'll be smashed by your attorney," said George. "If you are at all worried with business, I'll take charge of it for you, and—"

"Pray forgive me," said Frank. "When I came here I did not anticipate the subjects likely to be selected for our conversation; and I must beg, simply out of respect to the memory of him who is gone, that they may be changed."

"That's it, governor," said George, "the chap what has it won't part with it."

"Well," said Sir George, who with all his recklessness began to think the conversation was not quite what it ought to be "when do you start for France?"

"To-day," said Frank; "the steamer, I suspect, is nearly ready to get off."

"I say, governor," said George, "have you anything to send to Versailles?"

"No, no," said the baronet, somewhat more snobbishly than was his wont when speaking to his heir, "nothing, unless *you* have."

"This alternative was accompanied by a look such as was seldom given by him to his favourite; it evidently meant, "hold your tongue, you fool."

"I suppose now, every body goes to Versailles," said George, neither subdued by his father's looks, nor restricted in his allusions by what, for many reasons, ought to have been his own prudence and judgment."

"I am not going to France to see sights," said Frank, "I am going to Paris rather on business."

"Ah well, then," said George, "there's a museum at Versailles, dogs with double heads, great creatures moreover that lived before this globe was created, with feet and toes specially shaped out for waiting in the mud till the world was ready for

them to get into; and when it was all rolled up in prime order they found out it was no go, and so they were turned into stones: you know the whole history: it's uncommon queer, but the more queer the more curious—that's my notion."

"And so," said the baronet, reverting to past topics, and that in a manner implying a doubt as to the fact previously stated by his son, "you really have not been at the Amershams'?"

"I have already said so," replied Frank. "They were exceedingly kind to me in the days of my grief, and I should have been too happy to pay them a visit at their own house, but circumstances prevented my doing so."

Sir George and his hopeful heir again exchanged looks, which were not altogether lost upon Frank, who having done what he felt was his duty, and having been received and treated exactly as he expected, expressed his apprehension, that if he protracted his stay much longer he should lose his passage; and he made preparations for his immediate departure from his "paternal roof," for so it was, although it at the moment covered a Brighton lodging-house, and offered him neither shelter nor solace such as might have cheered and charmed him, or wooed and won him with that hearty welcome, the feeling of which is associated with such a domicile.

In fact, the reception Frank met with was most assuredly not calculated to induce him to lengthen his stay, even had he not been compelled by the regulations of the steamboat people to be on board at a particular time. Sir George certainly did exhibit so much of paternal affection as produced the offer of walking down to the pier with his son to "see him off;" but the heir and future head of the house voted that proceeding a bore, and remained in his slippers and *robe de chambre*, unwilling, if not incapable, of making so great an exertion as a proof of his fraternal regard and affection.

* * * * *

But now at Amersham's what was doing meanwhile? Jane Bruff had, after breakfast, as we know, again consulted Emma on the subject so near her heart; and we also know they had made further inquiries of Seraphine: but the results of their consultations were not satisfactory to the kind and ingenuous Jane. She was determined; and when these quiet, placid young ladies are resolved, it requires a superhuman power to turn them.

Colonel Bruff, to begin with, was exceedingly out of sorts, and cross, and irritable. He ate his breakfast with an excellent appetite, because not having sufficient mind or intellect to be annoyed by anything, as sensitive people are, he never failed to demolish his accustomed quantity of food; but it was quite evident that having totally failed in the object of his visit, and exposed his "talent" for prescience, judgment, and discretion to baronet and his son, his whole object was to get away from

the Amershams, and by returning to town and shifting the scene, get rid of the worry; and at the same time be enabled to fall foul of Mrs. Smylar for her false intelligence, which he felt the more inclined to do as his interest in Lady Gramm increased; or, rather—as he fancied—her interest increased in *him*.

The carriage was ordered at twelve. The colonel, instead of joining the circle after breakfast, was seen pacing the long gravel-walk of the flower-garden, evidently talking to himself, and suiting his action to his words energetically; by which monottelegraphic expedition it might be gathered, by those who were witnesses of his proceedings from the windows, that he was in the agonies of mortification at having been at once betrayed and exposed by the misinformation conveyed to him by his officious minister.

Jane, however, having made up her mind, thought that her father's walk would afford no bad opportunity of putting her scheme into execution; wherefore, arraying herself in a bonnet and shawl, she proceeded to join him in his excursion; and having passed through a shrubbery on his right, she, to use one of his own expressions, contrived to take him in flank, and before he was aware of her approach, he found her at his side.

"Well," said the Behemoth, in one of his least agreeable tones, "what do you want?—can't I be left alone for half an hour?"

"Why should you be left alone, my dear father?" said Jane. "While you are here, why should I not be with you?"

"Because I am not pleased," said the colonel. "I am vexed—I'm worried by my family—I am deceived and exposed."

"By whom?" said Jane. "Surely I do not—"

"No—that'll do," said her father. "I'm not talking of *you*. No matter—I shall see about that. But when do you come back? I shall hear from Sir George to-day, I dare say. Pretty joke too. What's the use of going on putting off this marriage?"

"The term," said Jane, "has been agreed to by all parties, and therefore there can be no reason—since, as it seems, nobody objects to its duration—to shorten it. Besides, my dear father, I have something to say upon the subject."

"There, that'll do," interrupted the colonel. "I'll hear nothing—not a syllable—not a monosyllable—I'm sick of it. There's treachery and falsehood, and all sorts of abominations going on, and I tell you I'm sick of it."

"What the treachery may be, my dear father," said Jane, "I know not. I am no party to it; and of falsehood, you, I am sure, will acquit me. But I have something to say which you must hear. Yes," added she, as she saw the storm gathering on the huge countenance of her lofty parent, "*must* hear."

"Must!" said Bruff, "Must, to a full colonel on half-pay!—that is an exceedingly strong expression. But, why *must* I?"

"Because, said Jane, fixing her gazelle-like eyes on his face,

"because your child's happiness and your own comfort depend upon it. Has Mr. George Grindle no tie to any lady living in or near Paris?—is there no lady there who bears his name?"

This was a shot for which the full colonel on half-pay was not quite prepared.

"Tie—name—what?" said he, "at Paris?—what do you mean?"

"Don't you recollect," said Jane, "that Lady Cramly, who makes it her business, under the pretext of pleasure, to find out everything about every body, and sell her information to the best bidder, gave us a description last night of a Mrs. Grindle, who, she says, is a daughter-in-law of Sir George Grindle, and whom she met in Paris?"

"Lady Cramly!" said the colonel; "oh, that's it, is it; that'll do. Why, Jenny, although I don't recollect ever having seen Lady Cramly till yesterday evening, I will venture any wager, even upon my short acquaintance with her, that not one word in fifty she utters is truth."

"But the name, father?" said Jane, laying her hand on his arm, and shaking her head doubtfully.

"There may be more than one," said the colonel.

"But, as was said last night, there is but one baronet of the name," answered Jane; "and besides, Smylar once said something to me—"

"Smylar *did*, did she?" exclaimed the colonel; "that'll do. She is a charming person, and a clever person, and prudent and wise, and cautious."

"If this lady bears his name," said Jane, "she must be dear to him. She lives in France, father; he has been there recently, and is but recently returned. What was the object of his journey thither?"

And now the colonel, finding himself in a very peculiar position, resolved at once to do that which is considered in any society, but more especially in the army, "excessively ungentle." What that *was* the reader will immediately discover. It was the result of a sudden thought—a master-piece of "strategy," as he considered it, the effect of which would be that of cutting two ways at once, or, as the saying goes, killing two birds with one stone.

"What—what," said the gallant officer, much softened in manner, "what did Mrs. Smylar tell you?"

"Nothing," said Jane, "nothing defined."

"Oh!" said the colonel, who was exceedingly puzzled how to manage his "manœuvre;" "but something hinted."

"A mere remark," said Jane.

"Well now, Jane," said the colonel, "you must promise me never to mention what I am going to tell you—at least till after your marriage—to George, or any body else. Of course when you two are man and wife, there will be—at least I hope so—no

secrets between you ; but till then it would be wrong to take notice of what might make a deuce of a stir-up in the family. What Lady Cramly said last night is more or less true—there is a Mrs. Grindle living in France."

"Oh ! there is," said Jane : "and how then can I—"

"That'll do," said the colonel ; "don't flurry yourself—don't make a fuss. You have nothing in the world to do with it—nor with her—nor with any body concerned with her."

"But how, sir," said Jane, colouring with energy and something like anger, "how can I, with the knowledge that the man who is to be my husband—"

"Stop, stop, Jenny," said the gallant colonel, who had accidentally brought her to the very point to which he wished to bring her ; "are there not *two* Mr. Grindles, sons of Sir George, eh?"

The question certainly staggered Jane.

"It is your duty, Jane," said the gallant officer, who saw the advantage he had gained, "to keep as still as a mouse upon this matter. *That* marriage has been the real cause of all the differences between Sir George and Frank ; and as Amersham told us, Frank is off for France this very day. What else kept him from coming here to see his future sister-in-law ? Why his wife and child in France. But now mark, this is in strict confidence, and I prohibit your mentioning it, even to your friend Mrs. Amersham."

"Surely, father," said Jane, "after what was talked of here last night, I might, in vindication of George himself, if with no other object, explain the circumstance at least to *her*."

"Have you any regard for young Frank, Jenny?" said the colonel, who had been instructed by Mrs. Simylar that she had a great deal.

Jane did not speak, but by her manner implied an affirmative.

"Well, then," said Bruff, "we are in hopes, now that the uncle is dead, to reconcile matters ; but if one word of this affair goes abroad, all the arrangements will fail, and the curse of the father will fall on the son."

"With all his stolidity, Bruff was sufficiently versed in some of the points of Jane's character to know where to plant his blows. The first telling hit was that in which he induced her to believe that the disclosure of the history of the clandestine and still secret marriage would be prejudicial to Frank's comfort and happiness ; the second with which he now followed it up was, in Jane's estimation, ten times more effective. That *she*, by any hastiness or indiscretion of hers, should bring down the malediction of the father upon his son, was an apprehension too dreadful to be endured by such a pure and holy-minded creature as she was ; and she agreed with her parent, that she ought to say nothing about it, being satisfied that in point of fact the reason, whatever it was, which existed for its concealment, did

not concern *her*; but at the same time wishing that Lady Cramly had been at Paris or any where else in the world, rather than at Amersham's, so that she might not have had the opportunity of hearing the story and unsettling her mind, which, after all, was not, as far as she is concerned, quite agreeably settled in the sequel, by the explanation which established that Frank Grindle was a married man.

"Well; now, you see then," said the colonel, "under all these circumstances, and all that kind of thing, you had better take no notice of what I have said; let matters take their course, and when you are married and settled you may perhaps use your interest and influence to bring about a family reconciliation, which will be all exceedingly nice and agreeable, and just suit your views and inclinations."

Jane had certainly hitherto been accustomed to place implicit confidence in every thing her father said, and, as we know, was at all times ready to uphold his character, and vindicate his conduct, even while suffering herself under his austerity and tyranny; but there was a nervousness and restlessness in his manner upon the present occasion, a hasty anxiety to dismiss the subject, and an expression in his countenance, which, taken in connexion with her own estimate of Frank Grindle's qualities, induced her for the first time in her life to question the entire accuracy of the history he had given her. Their *tête-à-tête*, however, was suddenly, and perhaps not inconveniently, broken up by the appearance of Mrs. Amersham, Lady Cramly, and Scraphine, on the walk where they were, as the colonel would have called it, "parading." As the enemy advanced, all Bruff said was, and that was said very significantly, "Now mind;" and he gave a kind of wink, something between the knowing and the authoritative.

Jane acknowledged the signal and said nothing, but, like "Cocky" in the fable, thought the more.

"Why," said Lady Cramly, whose voice had become to Jane more discordant than the scream of a pea-hen before rain, "you have been lecturing Miss Bruff so long, that we determined to rush in upon you and break up the dialogue."

This measure had in truth been suggested by Mrs. Amersham, who was quite aware that such a *tête-à-tête* was seldom agreeable to Jane.

"Thank you, madam," said Bruff. "Just in time; for we had finished all we had to talk about—said our say out, as the saying goes, and I presume my carriage is waiting."

"You are determined then to run away, colonel?" said Mrs. Amersham, with as much hypocritical civility of manner as her ingenuousness enabled her to assume.

"Perhaps," said Lady Cramly, "if we were very much to entreat you, you would delay your departure. I remember once in Russia Prince Vladimezinskoff came to the Rostwitzivag-

todat Palace, where my little girl and I were staying, *en famille*, and he meant to stop only one day. He remained a week; although being, as you know, my dear Mrs. Amersham, one of the ministers at the time I speak of, he was nearly certain of Siberia for neglecting his duty."

"I am neither a prince," said Bruff, "nor a minister; and I moreover differ so far from your Russian friend with the long name as this—he had to look after his master's business and stayed; I have to look after my own, and must go. That'll do, eh? That makes all the difference, my lady. However, Mrs. Amersham, I leave you Jane. She ought to be most grateful to you. Never saw her looking better in my life. She, however, will soon be taken from you when—"

"My dear papa," said Jane, "as you sometimes say, that'll do. Whenever you send for me home, I shall be found ready to obey your commands."

"That *we'll* do," said the colonel; "all I ask is obedience—no questioning—no reasoning—no looking to the right or to the left without orders. However, Mrs. Amersham, we shall expect you with her. You understand?"

Jane was suffering agonies of worry from the manner in which her father was hovering about the point, to her the most painful and delicate in the world; not to speak of her apprehension that Lady Cramly might revert to the scene in the Parisian shoe-shop, and force on an explanation of the real circumstances, which would have been most disagreeable to her. However, Amersham joined them at the moment, and the colonel having received a filial kiss from his sensitive daughter, took leave of the rest of the party, his big heart full of anger with Smylar for having sent him down from London on a fool's errand, and at the same time beating with a triumphant feeling arising from the success with which, as he firmly believed, his calumnious imputations upon Frank Grindle had been received and believed by his confiding and unsuspecting daughter—perhaps it would be more just to say, his *hitherto* unsuspecting daughter.

The colonel went—they saw him off—the ladies kissed their hands, and Lady Cramly, who the evening before had pronounced him exceedingly like her ill-used friend, Prince Vildovontodozich, protested as he stepped into his carriage, that he might be mistaken anywhere for her dear pet Baron Romblededomble, who being one of the most celebrated ornithologists in the world, had given her a golden eagle, and two humming-birds, which she had presented to the Zoological Society of Zeuta, in Hungary, of which she was made an honorary member, and had received a gold medal as big as a soup-plate, "stricken," as her ladyship said, "in commemoration of the victory gained there by Prince Eugene over Mustapha II. in the year 1697."

Emma looked at Jane, and Seraphine stooped down to admire a splendid azalia, and the colonel was driven off.

Emma, who knew every turn of Jane's countenance, and who could read in the beautiful index of her mind the thoughts which were passing there, could not observe the expressive gaze with which her eyes were first fixed on, and then followed the carriage which contained her father, without being certain that something unusual had occurred; that a change in her feelings towards him had somehow been wrought; and with that consciousness, her anxiety to get rid of her present associates temporarily, so as to secure a few minutes' quiet "talk" with her by themselves, became proportionably strong; but, as is always the case, the lady and her daughter and Amersham remained immovable—at least they moved about, but still combined, and in company.

Whether it is that under such circumstances people *do* linger, and are slower in their proceedings than is their ordinary wont, or whether the anxiety for their departure or dispersion, as the case may be, turns seconds to minutes, and minutes to hours, it is perhaps scarcely worth while seriously to investigate; but never in all the course of their acquaintance had Lady Cramly's romances appeared so long and so uninteresting to Mrs. Amersham, nor her husband's amiable attentions in walking with them so little gratifying. Emma wanted to know what *had* passed between Jane and her father, and at last a proposal of Amersham's to pull Lady Cramly and her daughter down the river Yarrell to a romantic spot—full of fish too—called Penny's Hole, was accepted with delight by her ladyship, who declared, that except in steamboats on the sea for the purposes of transit, she had never been on the water since her friend Signor Deodato Phingerini, of Venice, had taken her in a gondola to see the beautiful effect of the moonlight on the Bridge of Sighs, upon which occasion she was obliged to leave her dear Seraphine at home for fear she might catch cold.

"Well now," said Emma, "now they *are* gone, what has your father been saying to you—any thing in connexion with his visit to us? What? Come, Jane—come, you cannot hide your thoughts from me—speak."

Jane at first, in recollection and consideration of her promise to her father, hesitated, and then refused positively and absolutely; but any body who could possibly imagine that, under the circumstances of such unbounded and unrestricted friendship as theirs was, this reserve could be maintained, or this silence persisted in, must be mistaken. Accordingly after a time, and certain good and cogent arguments on the part of Emma why Jane should trust her, or rather why she should not withdraw from her, confidence which had existed for years, and never yet had been violated, Miss Bruff detailed all that had passed between her and her father during their morning walk, as far as she could recollect.

The effect the disclosure produced upon Emma was not exactly what Jane expected. Her own views and feelings of the

case were, that no such person as this exceedingly pretty *naïve* half English, half French-woman existed, except in the fertile imagination of the diary-keeping tourist; and if Colonel Bruff had taken the line of inquiring whether any such person did exist, Mrs. Amersham, "knowing her friend," as she said the night before, would have been perfectly prepared to believe him; but the moment she heard that the Behemoth admitted the existence of such a person, that moment did Emma believe there was something more in it than yet had met her ears.

"Was I then so exceedingly wrong," said Jane, "in expressing my anxiety to know something more upon the subject, when I spoke to you yesterday evening as we were going to supper?"

"Why," said Emma, "it turns out, my dear love, that you *were not*; but to those who know our fat and fair guest, any statement of hers is considered proof positive against a fact. But as you say your father allows that there *is* a Mrs. Grindle in Paris, as I have already said, the affair takes another aspect. I don't know, but from all I have seen—not much to be sure—of Frank Grindle—for Amersham calls him Frank, as so do I—I don't believe one syllable of the history."

"Then what does it mean, Emma?" said Jane.

"What did that amiable person, Mrs. Smylar, say to you," asked Emma, "with regard to this particular subject, which struck you so forcibly at the time, and which has retained its impression on your mind ever since?"

"I forgot the words," said Jane, "but they conveyed to me the idea that Mr. George Grindle had formed some sort of attachment, and—"

"I see, I see, dear child," said Emma, "and all *that* is exceedingly probable; but let us think a moment; if that *should* be the case, as your father has explained away the history of this Versailles beauty, that can have nothing to do with *this* history. What I do *not* believe is, that the younger brother is married, or that he has any tie of any sort that is likely to attach him to any woman on earth—except, perhaps, one."

"Indeed!" said Jane, utterly unconscious of the full extent of the meaning of Mrs. Amersham, who, being the wife of the Mr. Amersham who had visited Frank Grindle the day before, had, of course (as married men of kind hearts and communicative dispositions, blessed with exceedingly pretty wives, with amiable characters, will no doubt readily believe), been duly apprised of all that had happened during that visit, followed up by the expression of Amersham's own belief, that Frank, in spite of all that actually passed between them during his stay with him, was very much stricken with Jane Bruff. This we know, from our power of peeping into the history as it progresses; but Jane, with her sweetness of disposition and modesty of mind, scarcely felt conscious of her powers of captivation, or would ever

haps have known how much, how truly, and how deeply she was loved.

We have lightly touched upon the beautiful sympathy and the charming communicativeness which exists between men and their wives, when that blessed confidence is once established, without which marriage must be a curse—and having; in the most delicate manner insinuated that Amersham, after retiring from the turmoils of the world, gentle as they were under his own roof, had told Emma all that had happened at Frank Grindle's during his visit,—who were there,—what he considered his views to be, and his high opinion of the honour and feeling which he so admirably and chivalrously displayed,—it perhaps would not be asking the reader too much to imagine, that on the evening of the day of Colonel Bruff's departure, in which Jane told Emma all that had passed between that distinguished officer and herself, when Mr. and Mrs. Amersham were again restored to the paradiseal occupation of that apartment which in less well-regulated houses is said to be set apart for the delivery of curtain lectures, Mrs. Amersham, actuated by an equally friendly and affectionate feeling towards Jane with that which she knew animated her husband as regarded Frank Grindle, might have—in strict confidence—imparted all that Jane communicated touching the lady at Versailles.

Whether this fancy may be well founded or not, it is impossible to say. Amersham's house was the quietest of villas; it was all carpeted, and matted, and curtained, and squabbed, and not a sound was to be heard through the double cloth-doors with which all its bedrooms were guarded from wind or noise; but certain it is that upon this special occasion, about an hour after its master and mistress were supposed to be asleep, these words were heard,

“Emma, love, that's an infernal—”

What the concluding monosyllable—for monosyllable we may be sure it was—might have been, we set not down here, for it has not been communicated to us; but *this* we know, that the exclamation applied to the statement of the big Colonel Bruff as to the French lady and Frank Grindle.

“My love,” said Mrs. Amersham, “don't agitate yourself—I quite agree with you.”

“I wish it were morning,” answered the agitated husband; “I will not suffer this to rest. The first thing, dearest Emma, I will do after breakfast is to inquire a little more into the business of the crack-brained woman we have here, of whose story, as you say, I should have thought nothing, if old Bruff” (and here, hear it not, ye good and pious; or if ye do, make allowance for excitement produced by right feeling and an earnest desire to do justice, Mr. Amersham apostrophised him in terms too strong to be written) “had at once denied the fact; but this

shuffling and shifting—no, I care nothing for what happens—this shall be hunted out."

And so he went on declaring and resolving, until at last he fell asleep—an example which we hope for the sake of her health and comfort was speedily followed by his excellent wife.

In the morning our host was up early, and the hours seemed to crawl till his large and intelligent guest was gotten out of bed by her maid. Seraphine was earlier in the field, but Seraphine was too quiet, too unassuming, and too little inquisitive in herself to be able to answer Amersham's questions concerning the pretty Mrs. Grindle of Versailles. So Amersham talked to her of buds and flowers, and even of the fishes which they had seen in their yesterday's excursion; and Seraphine enjoyed this little morning *tête-à-tête*.

But it was not till after breakfast that Amersham brought Lady Cran'y into play. Then, when she made her first appearance for th' day, as much be-turbaned, and be-headed, and be-bustled, as if he were prepared for a country assembly, *then* it was that he rolled her, as it were, out into the grounds—(who is the old joker who compares such a woman to a fillet of veal upon castors?!)—and began by degrees, not to assail her too decidedly upon the subject, to touch upon Versailles and its accessories, and thence leading her back again to Paris, contrived to lodge her n the shoe-shop in the Rue Richelieu.

The siege was well conducted, but the failure was signal; the tourist with the diary had totally forgotten all about the matter; she might have heard of, perhaps did see, a Mrs. Grindle, and she thought she had, and it was somehow connected with a shoe-shop; but wanting the curaçoa, and other generous stomachies, by which her ladyship was in the habit of supporting her mental energies in the evenings, the varnish of the picture being absent, she could give no very distinct account of the princes or the dukes of whom she had so flippantly discoursed the preceding night; but she still held out a hope to Amersham, by telling him that she thought it extremely probable that in the course of the afternoon she should recollect all about it; the fact being, that her mind was completely occupied during the day in arranging her papers, which she certainly should not have taken the trouble of doing, but her dear "*Mett*" (as she called somebody) insisted upon her not permitting herself to quit the world without leaving it a treasure in the shape of her "*Loose Thoughts upon the Governments of Europe*," illustrated by Cruiksbank. This was the work upon which she was engaged, only Mr. Amersham was bound in honour not to mention it.

"Emma," said Amersham, after having had some conversation with the agreeable *romancier*, "this woman's account of the meeting is exceedingly confused. I cannot make out what it means—I wasn't here last night when she talked of it, and this

morning she seems not to recollect any thing about it. Relv upon it, the whole history, to use a brief, and by no means ger teel expression—rely upon it, it is all fudge."

" My dear Amersham," said Emma, " I should think so too but if Lady Cramly has forgotton what she said last night abt it, you seem to have forgotten what I said last night to *you*—if there is no ground for the story, why does old Bruff admit it truth?"

" Ah ! " said Amersham, recollecting that he had, perhaps, ne paid sufficient attention to all the details, " there you have it—suppose poor dear Jane is worried about it ? "

" Why," said Emma, " I have told her, it is no business o hers."

" Nor is it a business of Frank Grindle's," said Amersham ; , " rely upon it, here is something more to be discovered than first strikes us. I would this instant start off to follow Frank Grindle, whose heart is all truth, and whose mind is all candour ; I would ask him, and be sure of an answer : but he is gone—he is at this moment in France."

" And if he were not," said Emma, " what possible rigl. . my dear, good Amersham, have you to ask any such question? What claim can you have upon him? or even if you had, what int. est have you in his proceedings, to inquire into his family circumstances or connexions?"

" But, my dear Emma," said Amersham, " after our yesterday's interview, I have a right, for my own sake, and as vindicating myself from an imputation of being trifled with and imposed upon—by Heaven, I say I have a right to know from him whether the reasons he so generously—at least to all appearance—and so cordially gave me for not fulfilling his promise to visit us, are genuine and true; and after hearing what I have heard this morning, I must say that he seems to have been trifling with me."

" Now, my dear Amersham," said Emma, " do not needlessly run yourself into a personal quarrel—which I see will be the end of all this—about nothing. Supposing all that Lady Cramly says is true, and he *is* married, why need he have opened his heart to *you* about it? He might have given you his reasons for not coming here while Jane *was* with us, with just as much reason and justice as any other people you invite to your house plead illness, or, as they call it, ' a prior engagement,' because they wish to decline coming. As the matter has nothing to do with Jane, who is not going to be married to *him*, and as it can make very little difference to you whom he marries, leave the matter where it is."

" No," said Amersham, " I cannot consent to *that*, because I suspect there is some juggle in it; and you yourself say, that Jane thinks her father is not quite so steady in his statements as usual and I am sure, my dear girl, you agree with me that we

ought to do any thing rather than suffer that poor dear child's comfort and peace of mind to be endangered. No; I will put off writing to Frank till to-morrow's post, because it will give me the opportunity of again talking to the tourist at a period when, as it seems, even her poor good-natured daughter admits she is most communicative. After I get what I can pick up from her, certainly *will* write, and I can, I am sure, confide in Frank for a true and ingenuous answer."

This dialogue, although it had not been stormy, had been animated. Amersham was easily excited; Emma was excited too in endeavouring to calm *him*; and when this conflict of words, which had been carried on rapidly, ceased, Emma got up from the sofa, and was leaving the room. Amersham remained, with brows contracted, and his lips compressed.

It was as Emma got to the door, she suddenly paused, and after a moment's reflection, returning to her husband, said,

"My dear love, it just strikes me—if you really *are* so anxious to know more about this business, why not write to Miles? I amore? he is either in, or near Paris, with nothing on earth to do—he would be delighted with the mission."

"Emma," said Amersham, starting up in ecstasy, "Emma, my darling girl, you have hit it. What was I thinking of!—to be sure—the wisest thing on earth to do. I will write to him this very night."

CHAPTER XVIII.

In descriptions and classifications of the various degrees of anger, a variety of terms are used—"a towering passion," "an infernal rage," and half a dozen others, perhaps not altogether so delicate in their phraseology. If the best judges of such matters were to have adopted the strongest possible language as descriptive of Colonel Bruff's boundless impetuosity when he returned to town, they would best have "suited the word to the action."

"So, Mrs. Smylar," said the veteran, without waiting for the accustomed salute—we speak militarily—"so, a pretty fool you have made of *me*. Induced me to move my corps bodily upon false information—sent me to Amersham's to discover, confound, and expose Frank Grindle as a deceiver, an interloper, and a traitor, and no Frank Grindle was to be seen!"

Smylar, whose presence of mind (as imperturbable impudence is sometimes called) was very remarkable, instead of sinking at old Bruff's feet, like Fatima under the rage of Blue Beard, as she had frequently done at Bullock's-smithy, stood patiently looking him in the face, with a wondering expression of countenance, and a most provoking fixedness of eye; and then with unmuffled

muscles, except, indeed, some little quivering of her lips, which she compressed as firmly as she could, she threw herself into a theatrical attitude, and repeated the well-known lines from "Tom Thumb," in which admirable burlesque she had so often figured :

"Thus far with victory our arms are crown'd,
For though we have not fought, yet have we found
No foe to fight withal."

"That's all mighty well," said Bruff, "and you are a vastly clever person; but you have put me to inconvenience, and moreover made me look exceedingly ridiculous, by sending me down on a fool's errand to a house which I rarely visit, and in which I haven't been for several years. They were as much astonished at my arrival as—"

"The frogs in the pond," said Smylar, who, relying upon her influence, was all for a quarrel, "when King Log tumbled in amongst them."

"That'll do, Smylar," said the colonel, "as far as *that* goes; but that's not all—no—not half. I find that you have thought proper to let Jane know the history about George's *ci-devant* young friend in France."

"Me!" said Smylar. "Why, colonel, you have been bitten by some mad person while you were away! Why should *I* say anything about it?"

"Jane says you did," said the colonel.

"Is it not rather more likely," said Smylar, "that her confidential maid, Harris, may have hinted it to her?"

"How should Harris know any thing about it?" asked the colonel.

"How!" said Mrs. Smylar. "She is upon tolerably good terms with Mr. Rumfit, and *he* to my knowledge has been before now with Mr. George Grindle's man to the villa in the Regent's-park."

"That'll do," said the colonel. "If I could do as I liked, I would soon put an end to that confederacy, and send them both packing; but as it is—"

And here the gallant and disagreeable officer paused—his mind, as he called it, being full of the difficulties which he had himself created. He had, not perhaps fancying that so much of the true history was actually known, committed himself to his daughter—she that was all truth and honour—in a direct point-blank falsehood, and a falsehood which might be called of a "double dye," inasmuch as it not only went to deceive his innocent child, but to cast a stigma upon an excellent man, who, in addition to all his claims upon society generally, possessed that of being the nearest living connexion, except his father, of the very man who in a few days was to become his son-in-law.

"Well," muttered the great officer, "so let it be then. All young men have their indiscretions. Marriage will cure George, and the less said about it the better."

"I," said Smylar, "am all for a quiet life—I wish to see things go well and respectably in the family, and I would and will do every thing to maintain its character. But it is hard—very hard—at a time when I am doing every thing I can to carry your views and wishes into effect—sacrificing every thing for you—to be charged with imprudence, or carelessness, or improvidence. Even if I did say any thing to Jane upon the subject, it was because I was certain she knew of it before. If I say I will do a thing, I will do it; but I must manage as well as act—it must be done my own way, or not at all."

They who know the sort of influence which such a woman as Smylar is calculated to obtain over such a man as Bruff, will perceive at a glance that he was again trapped—again netted; and worse would have been his fate had his fair minister been aware of the real "state of the case," as regarded the imputation he had only a few hours before cast upon Francis Grindle.

Nor was he—the great officer—at all easier in his mind even after their reconciliation had taken place with the usual ceremonies, and his mandate as to dinner had been issued. The more he reflected upon his indiscretion in adopting for a temporary purpose a falsehood which, let what might happen, must eventually be discovered, the more he thought—instinctively at least—in the spirit of the passage of Sir William Temple's, which he certainly had never read, "that one time or other truth will be uppermost, like cork, though kept down in the water;" and with this worrying feeling in his mind he began to calculate whether he had not better make a *confidante* of his tyrant fair.

But Lady Gramm would be looking out for him at her little *soirée*—could he resist? or, rather, could he contrive to go to it? It was evidently a sore point with Smylar; so he made up his mind to secure his safe-landing there, by dining at the Doldrum, and thence proceeding to her ladyship's agreeable circle,—a decision which again inflamed the active housekeeper, who felt conscious that matters were drawing to a conclusion; and that unless she adopted some new and stronger expedient, the main object of her life would be lost—in fact, if something was not decided, as related to her interests, before Jane was married to George, her defeat in the great project seemed all but certain.

Under these feelings the colonel marched forth to dinner, and Smylar returned to her room, to hold a council with herself as to the best and most favourite course to pursue under all the circumstances.

Meanwhile, poor Jane's thoughts dwelt upon scarcely any other subject than the "young lady at Versailles." Strange as it may seem, we certainly know that her father's statement, that the lady belonged to Frank Grindle, had by no means quieted her;

in truth, from the most quiet and peaceful retirement—from the enjoyment of the utmost tranquillity of mind—she had been suddenly and involuntarily plunged, as it were, into a vortex of difficulties, and plots, and counterplots, and concealments, and stratagems, wholly unconscious of their origin, contrivance, or object, but still aware that she had all at once become a person of importance which she never desired, and of observation and remark which she least in the world coveted; added to which was the impending certainty of her marriage. Was it a certainty? That was the question she now began to ask herself. Could she endure the misery which she felt must inevitably result from her union with George Grindle? could she induce herself, even upon the principle of self-preservation, to rebel against her father? These were the two main points on which she had never ventured to touch seriously with Emma;—but as the days rolled on, and the time drew near for the “nuptial celebration,” she found her mind occupied by them more than she fancied it possible it ever could or would have been.

How far she had gone in her communications with Mrs. Amer-sham we already know: how much farther she might propose to open her heart to her friend, we have yet to discover? certain however it is, that that friend was herself a little unsettled by the account of the beauty at Versailles, and more than angry that the history of the neglected lady should have been given to Frank; because, besides not believing it, the very doubt which it raised impeached her judgment, which she felt certain could not have been so faulty as to induce her to admit and acknowledge the esteem and respect with which their amiable neighbour at Broadstairs had inspired her, if he were capable of despising so charming a person as Lady Cranly described that person to be; or, in fact, if he could have kept so remarkable a feature in his history undisclosed to those whom he at least *seemed* to treat like friends.

While these things were “progressing,” George Grindle—and Sir George particularly—began to get exceedingly nervous; for the worthy baronet had somehow heard that Ellen did actually assume George’s name—a circumstance for which he had not been in the first instance prepared, and which, now the intercourse between France and England is so constant and perpetual, could not fail to become an immediate matter of notoriety on this side of the Channel. The effect which his enlightenment upon this point produced upon his mind was a ravenous desire to hurry as much as possible the marriage of his hopeful son; for amongst other subjects connected with the main one, the visit of Frank to France did not at all contribute to his comfort or security. George took things more easily than the governor, but even *he* was slumbering in a treacherous tranquillity.

The English newspapers had announced the death of Mr. Leeson—those Ellen saw. If they had paused there, matters might have gone on quietly; but they went one step farther, and added, that

in consequence of this calamitous event the marriage of Mr. Grindle, son of the baronet of that name, with the beautiful and accomplished Miss Bruff, was necessarily postponed for the present.

Quite certain that George would never desert her, but still more anxious to know all particulars, Ellen wrote to him, in answer to his affectionate letter announcing the demise of his uncle, to know what the paragraph in the English *Morning Post* (which she cut out and enclosed to him) could possibly mean. Happy was the sympathy which seemed to inspire all parties concerned in the affair. His answer was, that his half-brother Frank was about to be married to Miss Bruff. He touched very lightly upon the event, but merely remarked hypothetically, that if he, George, had been going to be married to anybody, the death of old Lesson would not have induced him to put off the ceremony for half an hour.

This, flourished away with a promise to send over to her in a few days, was despatched, and as usual soothed and satisfied her unsuspecting mind. However, when Frank announced his projected visit to France, although George, as was his custom, put on a bold face, and laughed it off, he began to think that it might somehow cause an explosion. If Frank, as he himself had jokingly proposed to him to do, should go to Versailles, the name, the arms on his carriage, would at once awaken Ellen to the identity of the visitor. She would find him there not much after the fashion of a pleasure-postponed bridegroom. His name, as it was clear she openly used it, would catch his ears—they might—would naturally meet—and then an interchange of intelligence upon “family affairs” would unquestionably produce a complete *bouleversement* of everything in progress. As for the matter of principle, we will say nothing about it; but as carrying on their plot, the coincidence is curious, that both father-in-law and son-in-law should have hit upon the same expedient of throwing the whole blame of the transaction upon the only really true, honourable, and high-minded man of the whole party.

“Governor,” said George, after showing his worthy parent the letter and extract which he had just answered, as we have shown above, “governor, I think I have done that business clean—it’ll come well off the bat, if—ay, there *is* an if—if Frank and the girl don’t meet. I tell you what has just come into my mind, governor: let us beg him to come to the wedding. I’ll do uncommon affectionate. His heart is one of what they call the melters—a regular watering-pot in the sentimental line—lament past differences, hope for better days, eh?—so screw him back. He can’t have anything to do in France: and if he has, what is that to us?”

“Why,” said the worthy baronet, “to say truth, at first I felt rather glad that he was going, but you throw a new light upon the matter. Any *éclat* there would be bad—infernally bad—and

when he was here he was quite in the right tone for coming round. Ah, suppose we write him a kind invitation—beg him to come, eh?"

"Why," said George, "I take it something must be done—it wouldn't be pleasant to have Nelly come over, as they say,

'From Calais to Dover,'

with the pledge in her lap—eh, governor?"

"Better a pledge than a duplicate," said Sir George, condescending to borrow a joke, "the light of other days."

"But then," said George, "the execution, as I call the wedding, isn't to 'come off' for a fortnight—a deuced sight of mischief may be done long before *that*."

"Frank said," observed Sir George, "that he was going to Paris on business."

"So he did," answered the son, "but nevertheless in a city where pleasure *is* the business of the day, and night too, the graver occupations of its visitors soon become wonderfully relieved. If he once gets fixed there, I'll back him in for three weeks or a month."

"I don't exactly see what's to be done," said the baronet.

"Can't we write him a history like that of the dead magpie?" asked the son.

"Dead magpie?" exclaimed Sir George, "I'm basketed."

"Why, have you lived all these years, begging *your* pardon," cried George, "without hearing the way the affectionate servant broke bad news to his master?—it's as old as the hills. Young Squire Green, just such a turn-out as Frank, comes to his grandfather's place in the country,—met at the inn by old Dobbs the steward.

"'All,' says Dobbs, 'all here, sir, is right as right, excepting only that the magpie is dead.'

"'Oh, that all?' says the young chap, 'that's no great matter. What did the magpie die of?'

"'Eating too much horseflesh,' says Dobbs.

"'Where did he get that?' asks Green.

"'Surfeited himself off the coach-horses,' says Dobbs.

"'What killed them?' says Green.

"'Overworked, fetching water for the fire,' says Dobbs.

"'What fire?'

"'Up at the hall, sir,' says Dobbs.

"'What's the hall burned down?'

"'Yes,' says Dobbs.

"'How was that?'

"'One of the torches used at the funeral was left burning, and so set fire to it,' says Dobbs.

"'Whose funeral?' asks Green.

"'Your grandfather's, the squire's, sir,' says Dobbs.

" 'What ! is he dead ? ' eagerly asks Green.

" 'Yes, sir,' answered Dobbs, 'he shot himself because his bank failed, and he was clear entire ruined out and out.'

" And so you see, governor, all the story comes out of the death of a magpie."

" Gad," said the baronet, " I am afraid, with all your genins and imaginativeness, you will not be able to conjure up such a concatenation of calamities for poor Frank ; he can afford to lose more magpies than one."

" So could I, *entre nous*," said George. " However, rely upon it, after Nelly's letter, we are sitting on a barrel of gunpowder."

" Shall I run over to France," said Sir George, " and try to bring Frank back ? "

This suggestion, off-hand as it was, did not appear altogether injudicious. George had taught Nelly to hate and fear his father, and was quite sure that if the governor could establish himself with Frank, it would answer the double purpose, not only of making *her* certain that he was the bridegroom elect, but of keeping them separate, so strong were her feelings of dread and dislike towards the father of her beloved, and the grandfather of Tiney.

This scheme was forthwith put into execution, and, by the strangeness of the coincidences which seem to pervade our narrative, the announcement of its "perpetration" by George to Jane in his letter to her of that day, did more than anything else could do to ease her doubts and calm her apprehensions as to the lady at Versailles. George, in his letter, informed her that his father would take his departure for France in the morning, having some business of importance to transact with his brother Francis. This statement brought conviction to her mind, that her father's history was, after all, the true one ; and, indeed, the manner in which George—as well he knew how to do—gave a sort of colouring to the visit of his respectable parent to the French capital, made in her mind "assurance double sure ;" and her answer to his letter was written in such a different tone, under the impression that George was really not what he had been represented, that the *aspirant* felt a very strong disposition to make his long-threatened visit at the Amersham's, against which there certainly could be no possible objection under all the circumstances of the case.

At this period of our history, Mrs. Amersham was again placed in a very difficult position with Jane, who of course communicated the intelligence she had received from George, and the "comfortable" feelings with which his letter had inspired her. As upon former occasions (as we have seen), Emma's whole object was to support poor Jane in what she could not now consider any thing but a trial; but with this anxiety she could scarcely assume a sufficient degree of placidity to cover the expressions of her apprehension that Jane's present views were mere delusions ; she could not force herself to believe that Frank was in any way concerned in the Paris affair ; and therefore it must be admitted that she

was (to use a colloquial phrase) very like one of "Job's comforters" during the discussion of the question ; only begging Jane to recollect that Mr. Amersham had written confidentially to Mr. Miles Blackmore, and that his answer would be with them in perfectly good time for the alleviation of all these anxieties.

There was something painfully pleasing—some feeling for which Jane could not account to herself—which she experienced whenever Miles Blackmore was spoken of, and she could not help thinking, that if she were likely to be subjected to be wronged in this, the most important business of her life, Miles Blackmore would see her righted. There was, when he was serious and energetic, something commanding in his tone and manner, and above all, he had inspired her with a sincere admiration of his high principle and uncompromising honour. It is odd enough that Tiney and he should have become such good friends on the voyage and journey, upon the results of which, as it seems, so much happiness or misery is somewhere depending.

By the earliest steamer Sir George Grindle took his departure for Dieppe, not altogether certain that he might not overtake Frank, halting on the road to Paris. It was to be sure a most extraordinary expedition, considering that for so many past years, his main object had been to avoid his second son.. But there was a great stake to play for; and, in fact, the importance of the marriage of George with Jane had latterly become much greater, seeing that more money had been raised by the father and son upon the prospects which the completion of that union opened to view.

The plot—or, as Mrs. Smylar would perhaps have called it professionally, the underplot—began about this period of our history to thicken. While all these most unworthy manœuvres were in progress, she—she, the *primum mobile* of all the family mischief, herself began to be puzzled. The influence of Lady Gramm over the colonel, which she saw was growing daily, worried and confounded her—that was something to be counteracted, something to overcome if possible. The game she had been so long playing, was quite discomfited by this new interference ; all her designs with regard to Jane, as tending to her great object, seemed to be frustrated, and she herself left in a most deplorable position.

Can anybody doubt that such a woman so placed, so excited, so mortified, and so determined, would not quietly sit down under her disappointment ? No ; rely upon it that all the dirtiest tricks of her dirty trade, and all the malignant bitternesses of her fiendlike disposition, would be called into play, to frustrate the ends and objects of everybody who might even unconsciously be countering her proceedings, and thwarting her plans.

It was not because Colonel Bruff had returned irritable and angry from Amersham's—however much she regretted the failure of that scheme—that she doubted of her power to bring him back to gentleness and kindness, and all the other amiable attributes by which his else martial character was distinguished—she was sure she

could manage *that*. But Jane was away—away from her influence, or rather from the persuasion which she had latterly found so well succeed with her. Harris she feared to trust—and both George and Frank Grindle were utterly boyond her reach. Yet she could not rest—the desire to be meddling—to be doing something—to undo what, much to her disappointment, seemed to be going on, was uncontrollable—always observing that the present and immediate object of her detestation was my Lady Gramm, whom she began to consider in the light of *a rival*!

If the scene of the drama been laid at the colonel's house, the active little wasplike body would undoubtedly have contrived by some means to alarm Lady Gramm's pride or delicacy or infused into the inspired brain of her shadow Miss Pheezle, some kind of doubt as to the wisdom or propriety of her dear friend's marrying the colonel. The heroine of Bullock's-smithy had more than once played Betty Hiat in Macklin's "Man of the World," and she was quite prepared to act it in real life, had she means and opportunity. But there was the difficulty; the little *réunions* were at Lady Gramm's, to whose house she of course could not gain access. She felt sure that she should fail in persuading the colonel to remove the *venue*, as the lawyers have it, and try the cause in his own house, by giving one or two little parties there. Why should he do any such thing? Here were *her* drawing-rooms, *her* boudoir, *her* pastilles, *her* toady's singing, playing, and buffooning, *her* Roman punch, *her* powdered footmen, and blue-coated, white-waistcoated waiters, butler No. 1 and No. 2, with green-grocers and shoemakers to match Supper—sociable sit-down supper—the soup good, all the accessories as they ought to be, and the champagne—a very questionable point in a widow's house—excellent.

Why, then, with all this going on, should the gallant and distinguished rhinoceros be induced to unsettle himself? A lady like Lady Gramm collects round her a circle of beauty, and wit, and talent, and accomplishment; and although the season was now over, and there was really nobody in town, her gay little rooms were somehow crowded with somebodies who made the evenings—ay, even until the mornings—particularly gay and pleasant.

So much for the colonel: but what for the widow? She was a well-looking person, and although a little flourishing in her way, after the manner of Lady Cramly, and a vast many other ladies of the same class, quite agreeable enough to induce a gentleman of the colonel's standing, just on the point of losing the head of his establishment, to look at and after her. But "*ogni medaglio ha il suo reverso.*" What upon earth could induce Lady Gramm to encourage the hopes of the colonel? She certainly did not want a protector; she could take care of herself; and as for a husband—why, with all deference to her taste, when she might, with *her* fortune, have chosen any husband she pleased from amongst the young and thoughtless, who seem ready at a moment's warning to ob-

tain a settlement," should she have selected Bruff? So, however, it seemed to be—and so people talked, and so Smylar heard,—and that was enough.

Amongst the weapons used by such people as Mrs. Smylar, the upas-tipped arrow of the literary assassin was not wanting; the stilettoes of the Italian graced her armoury in the shape of anonymous letters, which she could forge and polish, and point and poison, according to will; and upon the manufacture of this deadly weapon she determined, unless the behemoth came quietly under her subjection.

"Try fair means first," said the harpy, "but then let them look out."

Amongst others of her friends, Mrs. Smylar entertained occasionally a certain Mr. Scratchley, who was—as the phrase goes—employed on a popular morning newspaper. He had known her for several years, and used occasionally to call, and be sociable with her when the colonel was out, after she came into, or rather *on*, the behemoth's establishment. Upon Mr. Scratchley, who, barring the tint of his linen towards the end of the week, was an exceedingly nice man, and wore a ring and studs—without which no person of any pretension in society *can* now show himself—she thought she could rely for a few paragraphs of "we understand" and "we believe" kind, which might do her cause good. She therefore wrote—and she wrote well and in a pretty hand—begging to see him, if he were disengaged, on one of the evenings when she knew, to her cost, Bruff would be occupied elsewhere.

Mr. Scratchley's answer to Mrs. Smylar was, that he was engaged all the week. *He* knew her, had known her, and was quite sure something ill was "in the wind," when he got her note; besides which, having been promised something—which he never got—for ratting, he felt he should damage his coming dignity by enjoying himself as before in the housekeeper's room of a house in Harley-street.

There is a story on record, which is sufficiently old to have been forgotten, which might be noticed here, as touching Mrs. Smylar's little literary attempt upon Scratchley. Mrs. Robinson—the Mrs. Robinson—the Perdita—at one time the everything—had written amongst other extremely pretty poems, one under the title of "*Sappho and Phaon*." Anxious, as all literary ladies are to have the charming effusions of their pens put in some sort advantageously before the world, Mrs. Robinson wrote a confidential note to Mr. Boaden, who was then editor of some leading newspaper, in which she said,

“Dear Sir,
Do let me have a few puffs for *Sappho and Phaon*.

Yours,

“M. R.”

This note she despatched to the office in the Strand by one of her servants.

Now it so happened that at that period thero lived in the said Strand, a somewhat popular pastrycook of the name of Boaden, to whom—as servants will do universally—by mistake, or rather by reading his name over the shop-door, Mrs. Robinson's man took the note ; to which she received this answer :

" J. Boaden's respects to Mrs. Robinson ; having sent so late, all his puff's is gone ; but he forwards a dozen gooseberry-tarts, which he hopes will do for the young ladies as well."

This sounds absurd, but is nevertheless very near if not quite the truth. Our friend Scratchley with the studs, however, fell far short of his predecessor, for he neither sent Mrs. Smylar the puff's nor the gooseberry tarts.

Smylar was vexed and irritated by the non-compliance of her gentleman of the press ; for when a tawdry, trumpery thing like Smylar feels herself, as she fancies, neglected or slighted, there is nothing on earth equal to her rage and bitterness. She had made up her mind—she knew what she would do—she knew enough of Mr. Scratchely to ruin him, and although she had sweetly bidden him to supper the night before—ruin him she would.

Thus thwarted in the paragraph line, she resolved to put the anonymous-letter scheme in force, waiting, however, till she had practically ascertained in what degree her influence over the colonel had diminished. Upon what points or topics this hateful woman proposed in the madness of her suddenly excited rage to touch, we must wait to discover.

Now as regards the hasty voyage of Sir George Grindle to France, and his mean and abject submission to his enriched son—we have much to say ; but meanwhile what happens at home ? The decencies of society have been satisfied by the seclusion of the baronet and his son during the period devoted to the obsequies of Mr. Leeson—that period is over—and Sir George is gone.

" Emma," said Amersham to his wife, " it seems to me quite out of the question, under all the circumstances, intimate as we are with the family, and Jane Bruff domesticated here, that we should not send an invitation to Mr. George Grindle to come and stay with us. Here we have under our roof his betrothed left in our charge. It seems that even she herself is not averse from his visit, and—"

" My dear Amersham," interrupted Emma, " why not wait till we hear from Miles Blackmore ? "

" What upon earth, dear Emma," said Amersham, " have we to do with anything more than the main question ? It is true I have written to Miles, and Miles will write to me, and we may hear more, or we may hear less ; but the plain simple fact is, that Jane is to be married to a particular man in a week or ten-days—she is living under our roof ; his father is gone to France ; and he is alone at Brighton ; now surely if we regard and esteem, as

sure *I* do, this charming girl, under her circumstances, or rather under all the circumstances of the case, we ought to invite her intended husband here."

"Why?" said Mrs. Amersham doubtfully.

"Come, Emma," said her husband, "suppose it were your own case?"

"Why then," replied Emma, "I could give you a plain, clear, distinct, and straightforward answer—inasmuch as no power on earth would ever induce me to marry a man whom I did not love, and with whom I was not sure of being happy through life."

"Bravo, Emmy!" said Amersham. "I really did not try for so flattering a speech. But our case, dear love, was different from this—here is something like compulsion on the side of old Bruff, but the question is, whether we should by excluding the accepted man while we shelter the affianced woman, become partisans in the discussion. I should say no—and more especially because we really know nothing of the intended. You never saw him, or if you did—"

"No, no," said Emma; "but wait till we hear from Miles Blackmore."

"My dear child," said Amersham, "whatever we hear from Miles Blackmore can have nothing to do with the great question. Suppose, Emmy—now don't be cross—but suppose there is a Mrs. Grindle in Paris or at Versailles—not that we have more than Lady Cramly's version of it—but suppose there should be a lady so calling herself—why, don't you see?—these things will happen, and—and—"

"Yes," cried Emma, "so they will: and men are the most cruel, heartless, and—"

"Stay, stay, my Emmy," said Amersham; "the lady to complain of that is the lady herself. If there be one at Versailles, Jenny has nothing to do with it—ought never to have known of it, and never would have known of it, if it had not been for our dreadful diary-keeper."

"Amersham," said Emma, "you are as bad as the worst of them—I have no patience with you—in fact, I declare—"

"Luncheon is served," said a servant, opening the door most opportunely.

"Very well," said Amersham, affecting the most perfect calmness. Emma felt flushed at being, as it were, detected in her animation.

The man retired.

"I shall write to Mr. Grindle by this post, Emma," said Amersham, resuming the dialogue and reverting to his point. "I do not see why he is to be excluded, nor do I see why we are to make ourselves partisans."

"Well, dear," said Emma, "may I ask Jane before you write?"

" You may, certainly," replied Amersham: " but, placed as we are, I do think and feel, that if it is unpleasant for her to meet Mr. George Grindle here, this is not a fit place for her residence; and, loving her as I do—as sincerely as if she were my sister—let her understand that, painful as it will be to me—to yourself she knows it will—I must, if she declines receiving under my roof the man to whom in ten days she is to be married, I must—Emma, I am bound in honour and duty, as a gentleman, to do so—restore her to the care and protection of her father."

" But you will *not* wait," said Emma.

" I have told you, my dear girl," answered he, " why I will not wait—I have nothing to do with any fact but the one—that our dear girl is about to be married—that her intended husband is shut out from her society as long as she stays here and he is not a guest in my house—with all the other details we can have nothing to do."

" Well," said Emma, " come to luncheon—I suppose they are waiting; but do not write till I have spoken to her."

Nobody can doubt the rectitude of Amersham's views, or the justice of his proceedings, however soothed, moderated, and even counteracted, by the sensitiveness of his wife's feelings. The real truth was, that Mrs. Amersham, knowing nothing of Mr. George Grindle but by hearsay, was convinced that with Frank, Jane's happiness as a wife would be secure. But, as Amersham said to himself, and indeed to *her*, what was *that* to *them*? At one time Emma was satisfied that no man could make Jane happy as a wife but Miles Blackmore. *That* went off—and why should she now, without knowing any thing of his half-brother George, pronounce Frank Grindle the only man calculated to ensure her comfort through life? Amersham was right in exhibiting such firmness, and although Emma generally carried her point, this was decided against her, and that even with Jane's partial concurrence; and a letter was accordingly despatched, inviting Mr. George Grindle to pay the Amershams a visit, and pass a few days until the return of Sir George from Paris.

A new difficulty arose heareabouts. Lady Cramly and her dear Seraphine were to take leave the next morning after breakfast; and then what would be the state of the establishment? One pair of lovers is a dreadful contingency in a country-house. Two or three indifferent people stroll about, and leave the fond couple accidentally to themselves; but in *this* case there would be nobody but the nymph and swain, and the master and mistress of the house. Emma thought of pressing—a performance generally very successful with her ladyship—Lady Cramly and her daughter to stay a little longer; but the horrid certainty that she would come out with the whole history of the pretty Mrs. Grindle at Versailles, rendered *that* a matter of impossibility; and so she resolved upon getting in some of the neighbours as reliefs; the clergyman's two accomplished and charming daughters, and the

village physician not to speak of some stray man or two whom Amersham might get down from town, who, from caring for neither smoke, smell, noise, whirl, rattle, or

“All the perils that environ
The man that meddles with cold iron,”

would unquestionably adopt the use of the railroad, which reduces—most satisfactorily to the feelings of a suburban resident like Amersham—the distance, calculating by time, of his house, from twenty miles in the country, to four from the metropolis; thus, under the influence of modern improvements, putting him happily and gloriously exactly in the position of a pipe-smoking cockney by the roadside at Clapham Common or Peckham Rye. These, however, are the blessings derivable from new institutions, and to which, above all, Mrs. Amersham was to be indebted for a supply of dandies for her next day's dinner, if she happened to want them.

It was now time for Jane to consider, deeply and seriously, the position in which she was placed. She had consented (how could she refuse?) to the invitation of George Grindle to the Amershams—he was coming there under her sanction. She was, as far as both fathers felt, and as far as certain awkward-looking papers, and signatures went, his wife—and—she hated him! A few days would only elapse before she was to be united to him for the rest of her existence—to love, honour, and obey him—to perform a thousand duties of tenderness which she felt he never could excite, and affection which she was certain she never could feel. Yet the curse of a father, with which she was threatened, weighed heavily in the opposite scale to that in which were poised her earthly hopes and affections; she felt that matters had gone too far; she felt even that she could not trust her dear, her affectionate Emma upon this subject; she was ashamed, as it were, of her own weakness, and turned with something like anxiety to—what will the reader think? —the advice of Mrs. Smylar!

Yes, such is the influence of practical active vice over pure and genuine minds; such too, the smirking plausibility of this particular woman, varied with an affectation of sensibility and tenderness of disposition, well *plated* with mock affection for her present victim, that Smylar, the stroller, had actually superseded Emma in Jane's estimation as a counsellor.

She recollectcd—as how could she forget?—the readiness and anxiety which Smylar had expressed to rescue her from the match; she recollectcd—for they still rang in her ears—Smylar's words when she said, “Trust to *me* when the time comes;” the time had come, or very nearly so, and Smylar was not near her. To write to her was what Jane could not undertake: she knew that she and Harris were in the habit of correspondence, and did not know that she herself was surrounded by spies, all intriguing and playing

their own games against her; but here, brooding over Symlar's suggestion of flying from her father's house, even on the eve of the wedding, sat poor Jenny, in the only house to which she could in such an emergency fly, having (as Emma, satisfied of the propriety of her husband's views upon the subject, had told her she must do) permitted the visit of her betrothed on the morrow.

The morrow came, and with it the packing of Lady Cranly's carriage, which was that in which she went her tours, and was furnished with all sorts of drags, chains, pans, hammers, and tongs, as if it were to be started at that moment for Switzerland. The innumerable bags, boxes, sketch-books, camera-lucidas, telescopes, little chairs, umbrellas, female Macintoshes, snow-boots, writing-desks, and other such matters, required much time and skill in stowing away; but her ladyship never travelled without them—something *might* happen—her whole object was obtaining information herself and imparting it to others: it might snow in June in England, for it has before; and the Derby of 1840 was run in a snow-storm—therefore her boots: she might see something that struck her in her drive—hence her camera-lucida.

"I know I am very odd," said she, as she was taking her leave, "and very fussy; but then you see that's *my way*, as poor dear Prince Roustemout used to say in his beautiful broken English, 'My lady, your ladyship is like Noah, you carry all de world in your ark.' Poor dear man!—Seraphine has a great deal to answer for about him—he might have been alive now, only she is so insensible, and has no ambition."

"My dear Ma," said Seraphine, "the poor dear old man died of gout in his stomach!"

"Ah, my love," said her ladyship, "they told *you* so; that was considerate—it was heart, not stomach; however, never mind, the dearest friends must part, and so, my sweet Mrs. Amersham, we have only to say adieu, and to thank you for two or three most delightful days. I shall tell the bishop what a charming place you have got here. By the way, do you think your fair friend would like the bishop to perform the ceremony?—because if she would, I have only to say, dear Kit—his name is Christopher, but I always call his lordship Kit—will do you do so and so? and he'll do it in an instant."

"Why," said Mrs. Amersham, "I am not sure that she would like to be spoken to on the subject—everybody has his fancy, and she has hers; and although it *is* to be—"

"Ah! ah!" said Lady Cranly, "I see—I see what you mean—exactly what the Empress once told me in confidence about one of her cousins—a *marriage de convenance*: but—ah, well, then of course don't say a word about it; only I know dear Kit would have been too happy—his lordship is such a duck of a prelate."

"Now, Ma," said Seraphine, who, although she had been talking

to Jane, had overheard all the points of her mother's speech, "the carriage is all ready."

"But I am never ready to leave such a kind host and hostess," said Lady Cramly; and then, in order to be particularly civil to poor Jenny, who almost cowered at her approach, she walked up to her with a face radiant in smiles, and taking her by the hand, said,—

"Good bye, dear Miss Bruff; I wish you all the happiness and comfort, and everything you can possibly desire in the world. I hope we shall often have the pleasure of seeing you in town; Seraphino will be delighted; and while we are in London, we can give you some capital music, and some very nice people. Good bye, dear."

Saying which, she took a most affectionate farewell of the unhappy girl, and then cuddling herself up in a shawl mightily resembling a blanket, she considered it necessary to salute Mrs. Amersham on the cheek, having done which, she slipped her arm through that of Amersham, who conducted her to the carriage, into which he handed her—an operation not so difficult to effect as might be supposed, considering her ladyship's size and gravity, for the moment she put her foot on the steps, the carriage, as if conscious of her empire, bent over her so as to receive her with little or no difficulty.

"I hope," said her ladyship, as she threw herself backwards in the "ark," "I hope you like my rug—worked for me by the young Countess Flapsky. It's quite a love, isn't it?"

"Beautiful!" said Amersham, which he had scarcely time to say, before Seraphine vaulted into the vehicle with an elasticity which greatly startled the nerves of her courtly dame. However, she was full of sensibility and consciousness of her mother's absurdities, which kept her in a state of constant excitement during the whole period of the parental exhibition, and the happiest moment of her life was when—at least for the day—the curtain had fallen on the performance.

Well, away they went, and of course formed the subject of conversation after their departure. It might seem like a breach of confidence to disclose the particulars of what passed in detail; but as far as the general feeling went, it seemed to be one of something not very unlike satisfaction that her ladyship had taken her departure.

The next step which Jane proceeded to take, was to write to her father, informing him of the projected visit and expected arrival of George Grindle. This she knew would please and soothe him. She felt, moreover, confident that the intelligence would unquestionably reach Smylar; and although she could not satisfy herself as to the probability of any benefit arising to her from that circumstance, still if Smylar as well remembered what she had said on the subject of the marriage as Jane did, it would at least give her information of the progress of the affair. But as Jane was now tempo-

rizing, it might be almost called trifling, she was apprehensive that Smylar might suppose that she had really become reconciled to the match, and so withhold her exertions to frustrate it: but that mattered little, inasmuch as Jane would be in town for at least a week before the ceremony, and then would come the opportunity for opening her heart—to her bitterest enemy.

As for George, the arrival of Amersham's letter startled, yet, as matters were going on, pleased him. It was warm, friendly, and genuine, and of course could be answered but in one way. He accepted the irritation and would be with them the next day. To be sure, it might have come to him with less alloy, had not the same post brought him this:

“ Versailles.

“ Dearest George,

“ Our poor Tiney is very, very, ill. The French doctors think it an attack of scarlatina. Mr. Havard hopes better. The poor child is dreadfully feverish, and occasionally delirious. He calls for papa sometimes half an hour together, and when papa does not come, bursts into violent floods of tears. Can you, my dearest love, contrive to come over—even for one or two days? Much as I desire to see you, and be happy again in your dear society, it is not selfishness that prompts this letter. I would not on my own account, either bring you from the scenes and pursuits which I know you delight in, or endanger the tranquillity which I hope and trust you are now enjoying with Sir George; but for our poor dear child's sake, I do implore you if you possibly can, come and see him, and come soon, or perhaps, dear George, the poor boy may never see *you* again. Don't write dear love, but come.

“ Yours always unalterably,
“ ELLEN.”

“ There's a pretty go!” said George, tossing the letter down upon the table. “ *I can't* go, and if I could, what good could I do?—catch the scarlet fever perhaps. I should be sorry if Tiney was to trot, because Nelly is so fond of him—and yet what have I to do with Nelly? I'll send her over some stumpy—fee the doctors—keep her mind easy, and all that—but—”

And here he took up Amersham's letter, and re-read *that*; and *then*, to do him as much justice as he deserves, he *did* feel, and bitterly too, about poor Nelly and her child—*her* child—*HIS* child. But of what avail now were these compunctionous visitings? It was all too late, even if the transient gleam of natural affection which warmed his heart for a moment, could have been, as it were, daguerrotyped there; but alas! five minutes dissipated it, and the old consolatory, “ Well, I can't help it; it's all no use talking now,” came to his aid, and he decided the business by writing the three following letters:—

" Brighton.

" My dear Jane,

" I have just received your uncommon nice little note, which came in neck and neck, as it were, with your friend Mr. Amersham's exceedingly kind letter. My talent for writing is not remarkable, as you know; so as I have accepted his invitation for to-morrow, and we shall meet so soon, I need only say how sincerely and truly I am, my dear Jane,

" Yours,

" GEORGE GRINDLE.

" I have not heard from the governor since his arrival on the other side of the water—suppose I shall to-morrow before I start in the morning, as he is uncommon particular in that line."

This was number one. Now for number two.

" Brighton.

" Dear Sir,

" I feel exceedingly obliged by your kind attention, and shall very gladly accept your invitation to-morrow. I have often heard Jane speak with great affection of Mrs. Amersham and yourself; and Colonel Bruff I know has the highest esteem for you both.

" My uncle Leeson's slip-out was particularly awkward just at the minute, inasmuch as it has upset all the preparations which had been nearly finished, and cast me and the governor into the shade, just as we were coming out shinily. I don't think you know *my* governor—he is a right good one, and will go any pace; and I am about to take a great liberty with you upon so short an acquaintance, and that only by letter—I mean, that if he should come back in a day or two from France, I should feel obliged if you would let me leave word as to where I am to be at peck and perch, so that if you have room for him, he might join our little family party, which I consider it, under your hospitable roof. However, as I shall hope to be with you before the next post, perhaps it will be better for me to make my petition in this case in person.

" As I have not the honour of Mrs. Amersham's acquaintance, I must not beg you to present my best compliments to her, but I hope by this time to-morrow to tell her how much I am her humble servant, and begging you to accept my best thanks, to believe me,

" Dear Sir,

" Yours truly,

" GEORGE GRINDLE."

There is something, as we know, in the third number which is strange, curious, ominous. It is useless here to enter into a discussion of the various attributes, considerations, combinations, and

concatenations therewith connected—let the facts speak for themselves—let letter *number three* be read.

“ Brighton.

“ Dearest Nelly,

“ Your melancholy note followed me here. I am deucedly sorry about poor Tiney—it shows uncommon kind his crying after *me*, and there is nothing in the world I wouldn't do to get over ; but the governor, although in a better humour, is still as sly as a fox ; his notion of our parting, you know, was, that we really meant to part altogether, so that I am obliged to mind my P's and Q's, as they say ; as for getting away at present, it is out of the question.

“ The poor pup must have been taken very suddenly. Don't forget you—If—tell your Ma to cherish you, and have good advice. I don't half relish the French doctors—stick to Harvard. I enclose you an order on La Fleur for five-and-twenty pounds, and I hope that will be enough to make Tiney well. I hope, moreover, that he has not lost his stick, eh ?—Fox.

“ Write to me, and direct to Crooky's as usual—the letter will be sure to find me. Send me word that the boy is well, and that will do ; and when some of the pheasants are dead, we shall meet.

“ Adieu, my Nelly. Kiss the pup from me, if it won't endanger yourself. Remember me to your Ma, and believe me, dear girl,

“ Yours always,
“ G. G.”

There are certain events occurring daily, which require no comment—and surely, after a perusal of these letters, a word of observation would be superfluous. Suffice it to say, they were folded, sealed, directed, and despatched ; and horses were ordered for Mr. George Grindle's carriage by twelve the next noon to take him to the Amershams’.

CHAPTER XIX.

IT was clear that at this period of our history, as Mrs. Smylar, would have quoted it, the time had arrived for the

“ Trouble, trouble,
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.”

As far as matters had already gone, she had been defeated,—or if not actually defeated, baffled in efforts the success of which,

knowing with whom she had to play her game, she never doubted. But here, by a singular sort of fatality, the doltish colonel, over whom she certainly had an influence of one sort, and his innocent and unsuspecting 'daughter, whom by other means she had gotten into her clutches, were both removed from her power. The subordinates she doubted; and, in short, never had monarch fallen from a throne in a shorter time than Smylar had been toppled from the pinnacle—as she not unjustly calculated it—to which she had exalted herself in the establishment of Colonel Bruff.

If Mr. Leeson had not died, the marriage would have gone on—Jane would have remained within the sphere of her power—and then, as we know (for we have already heard the *programme* of her performance from her own lips), she thought, or rather was certain, that she had the tact to induce Jane to fly from her father's house rather than to submit to the marriage. Now, by the delay, not only was Jane taken away from the effects of her manœuvrings, but was actually at the only house to which Smylar knew she could induce her to fly for refuge from the misery she dreaded; and not only there, but there associated with this very intended husband.

Upon one point—luckily, perhaps for all parties—Mrs. Smylar was even up to this moment uninformed—the yearning desire which we know Jane Bruff to have felt for her advice and suggestion at the important crisis which was fast approaching. The dignified disinclination on Jane's part from writing to Smylar, stopped the means of communication that way: and things had arrived at such a point, that if even Miss Harris had fancied that her young lady did feel any anxiety for such counsel, the jealousy which had unquestionably sprung up between those worthies, and Miss Harris's anxiety to remain with Jane after her marriage (and probably after her own with Mr. Rumfit), closed *that* channel; and Smylar, doubtful now of her ability to manage either Jane or her father, determined to proceed, in the first instance, by endeavouring to destroy the acquaintance—to call it by no softer name—which was too evidently existing between the great colonel and Lady Gramm. Finding herself neglected by her friend Scratchley—which she at something like fifty-three thought, under all the circumstances of their former acquaintance, ungrateful—she determined to take this matter in hand personally herself, and endeavour, by dint of her anonymous letters, to separate them, making also a great and suitable effort, if possible, to implicate Miss Pheezle as the writer of the attacks; for which, as she would inevitably be turned out of the house whenever Colonel Bruff turned into it, she thought, with her dramatic head, might be worked up very naturally; and having revolved the matter in her mind, she sat herself down to work to make up a very pretty quarrel between the colonel and my lady.

But there *was* a difficulty in the arrangement of the plot—a difficulty which perhaps does not at the first glance strike the reader. What upon earth could she make them quarrel about? Jealousy, which is a wonderful ingredient in such an affair, seemed wholly out of the question. The little flightinesses of youth had flown away—not even Lady Gramm could be made to believe that Colonel Bruff had fallen in love with Miss Pheezle; nor did Smylar confidently hope to excite any very powerful sensation in Bruff's great heart by insinuating that somebody else had fallen in love with Lady Gramm. No; the tone to be taken would be that of cautioning Lady Gramm against surrendering her independence to the colonel, at a moment when the approaching marriage of his daughter would naturally require an expenditure and settlement, and up to which period he had never exhibited any symptoms of a matrimonial character or disposition.

There cou'd be no doubt if Smylar could have succeeded as he expected to do, in inducing Jane to elope from her home before the marriage, that old Bruff, with his violent and vindictive temper, never would have permitted her to re-enter it; and then the ball would have been at her foot, and the game in her hands. But having as she believed—although in point of fact she had not—been baffled upon this tack, she considered the other the best to try, and so let us leave her, while she goes to work in her den, to practise all sorts of disguises of hands, get proper paper, and make up bread-seals, which might, if well-contrived, cast an imputation upon some innocent person, or, at all events, give her time for further consideration—let us leave her, we say, to her elaborate iniquities, merely wondering how far such business is permitted to succeed in this world of ours, and speculating whether we shall ever see her the wife of Colonel Bruff, and the mother-in-law of the future Lady Grindle.

It was on the day preceding Smylar's determination upon the anonymous attack, that George—the George—the superlative George, proceeded to, and arrived at, the Amersham's. Never was greater trouble bestowed in turning out a dandy to the best advantage than on that morning. Everything he wore was plain and simple, but, taking the word in all its acceptations, "exquisite." His efforts had certainly succeeded, for he made a sensation when he was presented to Mrs. Amersham, far and away beyond that which, according to his own diary, the immortal Pepys created in church the first day he wore his perriwig.

" Nov. 8th.—To church, where I found that my coming in a perriwig did not prove so strange as *I was afraid it would*—for I thought that all the church would presently have cast their eyes on me."

If so, and it promised to be unpleasant, why did the worthy Pepys wear the perriwig?—*certainly*, whatever Mr. George Grindle wore, produced a very favourable effect upon Mrs. Amersham,

who, as yet knowing nothing of his mind and manners, except by hearsay, gave him at first sight the precedence of his brother as to personal appearance.

A man of the world, like George Grindle, is not apt to be slow at comprehending the language of looks, even if they are carefully restrained and moderated. He knew at a glance that Mrs. Amersham thought well of his personal appearance, and endeavoured to express (which with his tact and facilities was not very difficult) that she had impressed him with the most favourable opinions of herself; in which, by the use of the "devotional" which he could so well assume, mingled the highest possible deference and respect.

The relative power of male personal and mental attractions over female minds, has been so frequently the subject of extensive and important discussion, that it may scarcely be worth while to open the question here. The Duke of Buckingham says,

"Plainness and truth gain more a generous heart,
Than all the crooked subtleties of art."

But Buckingham was then speaking of female beauty, or rather the want of it, and speaking truly and justly; for mere regularity of features or countenance however, dazzling for the moment or the hour, have not the power to gain the affections.

"A world of things must curiously be sought,
A world of things must be together brought,
To make up charms which have the pow'r to move
Through a discerning eye—true love."

It was once remarked by a leading contemporary critic, that as a novelist proceeds in his literary career, if he be well and carefully watched, it will be found that he advances the age of his hero, the lover and loveable hero of his work, in due proportion with his own progress through life, and that he depicts as youthful and ardent after twenty years' writing the sort of gentleman whom, when he first started as an author, he would have set down rather as an amiable parent of his heroine, than a devoted suitor.

So might we suppose that the authorities derivable from writers on the subject of the relative powers of personal beauty, and intellectual qualities, may be quoted from the works of that class of authors, who, as regarded their appearance, came under Foote's description of one of his farcical heroines—"Plain but genteel, like a Wedgewood teapot." But this is not the case; for the majority of those who have treated the subject, happen, according at least to the evidence of their "effigies" handed down to us, to have been exceedingly well-looking persons.

Probably it might have been from personal experience even

these recorded their opinions and feelings. Certain it is, that on the first blush—not of Mr. George Grindle, for blushing was not his *foible*—but upon the first appearance of that worthy, Mrs. Amersham was prepossessed in his favour; and although still admitting her regard for his brother Frank, she began to think Jane somewhat “particular,” if not capricious, in having, as the phrase goes, set herself so completely against him.

But all this was illusion. At first sight, and for a short time, the counterfeit coin may deceive the uninformed: let it get its fair proportion of “wear and tear,” in a purse of genuine money, and the simple contact will soon destroy its superficial splendour. George was all that could be expected or even desired in society, for the first two or three hours of one’s association with him; but as he became more familiarised with his associates, and began to feel the advantage he had gained over them, the tone and style of his conversation changed; and guarded as he was by the efforts of his conventional good-breeding, he too distinctly proved that, with a certain smattering of knowledge and smartness of manner, he was not calculated to attract, and still less to retain, a heart like that of Jane Bruff.

Yet there was, in point of fact, more *in* George Grindle than he would permit you to think. He affected a sort of childish manner of speaking, and talked, as we have already seen, in a phrasology peculiar to a certain, and certainly not the best, clique; and although there was a quaintness and oddity in its style, when adopted by a well-looking “gentleman,” which was attractive at first, it grew tiresome by constant practice, as must and will do every thing in society which is not founded upon natural impulses, and expressed in a natural way.

Mr. Amersham did the honours with all the amenity of a well-bred host; but he, having perhaps had greater experience in the school of which Mr. George Grindle was a disciple, did by no means, even in the outset, participate in his wife’s approbation of their newly-arrived visitor.

One thing struck both the master and mistress of the house; indeed it was too evident to escape the notice of the most cursory observer—the evident desire of both George and Jane not to be left to themselves—not to be indulged in any of those delightful *tête-à-têtes* for which real lovers long, and which Mrs. Amersham, when she proposed enlarging their party, was so anxious to secure to them. If any opportunity occurred, of which an ardent swain would not have lost a moment in availing himself, George lingered behind; if ever Jane found herself at such a distance from Emma as to render possible the approach of George alone, she fled to her friend as if for protection. Jane’s decided repugnance to the match, if not actually to the man, might easily account for the one—but for the other?—did ever any thing like feeling for the poor deserted Nelly strike through George’s heart?

These are questions which we cannot pretend to answer; but thus much we can see—that a less ominous progress towards matrimony has really been exhibited to mortal eyes than this of Mr. George Grindle and Miss Jane Bruff; and yet the result seems inevitable.

It has been aptly remarked in a very clever review, that the author, or rather the narrator of the details which the reader is now perusing, takes frequent occasion in all the preceding histories which he has published, to work out his characters, or bring about his *dénouements*, at, or after dinner. Nothing can be more just or true than the axiom that no man knows himself. I was not conscious of this peculiarity until it was thus pointed out to me by a stranger. The moment it was noticed I looked back at as many of my “narratives” as I could lay hold of at the time, and sure enough every important event occurs at “dinner” or “supper.” I have before noticed this just conclusion, and I have defended it, as I must again, upon the plain and undeniable fact, that it is *at* and *after* dinner or supper (more especially when the supper comes late, after a ball) that all the pleasurable business of society is transacted, and that the bashful Englishman and the timid Englishwoman are never so much at their ease as when they are sitting round a table; and moreover, that the table in question, whether one eats and drinks or not, is, and must be, the *point de réunion* of every circle every day in the week, whether in London or in a country-house.

There seems to be no great objection (neither does any good-natured critic make any) to such dinner or supper-table being the scene of action. But whether it be so or not, I cannot help it, for after trying to fix Mr. George Grindle somewhere at Amersham’s, I found it impossible, until, in a true English spirit, I caught him sitting with Amersham “*after dinner*,” when the ladies had retired, and their *tête-à-tête* was only broken in upon by one visitor, “a quiet, gentlemanlike man,” who seldom spoke, but who happening to have a set of remarkably white teeth, smiled perpetually upon those who did. In willingness to dance with a dowdy if asked, and to pass the wine when told, this “quiet gentlemanlike man” was beyond price. He was one of Mrs. Amersham’s tame men—was greatly patronized in the family by Miles Blackmore, and although he had been exceedingly intimate with Jane Bruff at other times, was so well trained as to know that he must not so much as look at her on that particular day.

The character of a “quiet, gentlemanlike man,” which in general society is equivalent to that of a remarkably stupid person, had been acquired by this Mr. Danbury, in consequence, not only of his practical obedience to all orders issued to him by ladies in the regulation of their parties and privileges, but by his implicit acquiescence in everything that was or could be said by anybody about anything, in any place or at any time. There was

a gentle lassitude in his manner which indicated, that the trouble of opposing or contradicting any human being would annihilate him ; and so he was an universal favourite wherever he went.

"Uncommon nice place you have got here," said George to Amersham. "I took the liberty of running my eye over the stables. Capitally done—boxes beautiful, and some pretty considerably nice nags in them."

"Two or three of them, I believe, belong to my friend Danbury," said Amersham.

"Two," said Danbury, without moving a muscle or opening his teeth; "one, the grey, I bought at Tattersall's. Gave sixty guineas for him, and wouldn't take double the price. The chesnut I got of Miles Blackmore."

Now, what it was—whether Miles Blackmore, *did* possess some superlative influence, or whether he had either consciously or unconsciously contrived to attain a power over his associates which they appeared to admit—one cannot exactly say; but certain it is, that the tone and manner in which the gallant, gay Mr. Danbury mentioned the name of the man from whom he had purchased his chesnut horse, were such as to lead the hearer to infer, that however excellent might be the qualities of the grey which he had bought at Tattersall's, the simple fact that the chesnut had been Miles Blackmore's, was enough at once to stamp its superior value, without any further observation or remark.

Upon this special occasion the mention of the name of Miles Blackmore appeared to cause more than the usual sensation. Danbury quoted him as an "authority;" but the instant the name passed his lips a sort of electric shock seemed simultaneously to shake Amersham and George Grindle. Amersham's eye glanced upon George, he being conscious that he had written to Miles Blackmore, to inquire into the real truth of the history of the lady at Versailles; and George Grindle's eyes glanced instantaneously upon Amersham, because he was conscious that Miles Blackmore knew a great deal more of the "state of the case" than he should like to have known where he then was. The effects of this double consciousness were not seen by Danbury, who followed up his remark upon Miles Blackmore by inquiring from Amersham whether he had heard from him lately?

It would be difficult to decide which of his companions was the more embarrassed by this very simple and natural question—Amersham, aware that he had written to him to make the most delicate and important inquiries upon a most important and delicate subject—or George Grindle, wholly ignorant that any such step had been taken, still perfectly conscious that the gentleman in question knew enough to overthrow his plans as regarded Jane Bruff. So the result of the question was a sort of "dead lock," as Sheridan calls it. Amersham looked

attentively at George Grindle—George Grindle fixed his eyes on Amersham; and the dandy Danbury, not exactly knowing what the real effect was which had been produced by the mention of his friend's name, looked altogether astounded.

"Capital fellow, Miles Blackmore," said Danbury; "as high principled a man as breathes, and the best judge of a horse I know."

"You can't praise him too highly," said Amersham; adding, as he addressed himself to George Grindle, "Do you happen to know our friend?"

Now this was a very puzzling question, and one which, under all the circumstances, was very difficult for Mr. George Grindle to answer. To admit that he did know him would, as he apprehended, be to lead the conversation to the details of how he met him, when he met him, and where he met him; therefore it appeared most prudent to George to deny any knowledge of him beyond believing that he had seen him "about."

"I wrote to him," said Amersham, "a day or two ago. In fact, I wanted him to come over to us, but he seems quite in love with Paris."

"Or with somebody in it," said Danbury.

George Grindle felt exceedingly uncomfortable. He was conscious of flushing up—he could hardly account for the sensation—but so it was.

"No," said Amersham, "my friend Miles does not strike me as particularly susceptible. His chief attraction in Paris is the Louvre. His devotion to art is remarkable, and being an artist himself, I believe he employs a good deal of his time copying the old masters."

So did Nelly. It was there, and by those means, that she had acquired the proficiency, which in the warmth of her affection for George she had offered to turn to account for his sake when he spoke of his pecuniary difficulties. The rapid transit of the railroad brought Versailles close to Paris, and with her mother and poor Tiney for companions, she occupied her time and mind—which, poor dear girl, required occupation—by working at her easel in the gallery. It must not be denied, that whenever such circumstances, or the associations of other days, were incidentally brought to his mind, George was considerably affected; and perhaps if he had known how intently Amersham's eyes were fixed upon his countenance during the conversation relative to France, he would have exhibited stronger signs of consciousness and agitation than he did; for so completely was Miles Blackmore mixed up in his thoughts with Nelly, whom he knew he was betraying, and with Tiney, who perhaps was on his death-bed or dead, that with all the *nonchalance* for which he was evidently celebrated, he scarcely knew whether he was sitting at table, or whether he should be able to keep his seat many minutes longer; in fact he was not in the slightest degree pre-

pared to find that his travelling acquaintance was, as he appeared to be, the *enfant de famille* at Amersham's, the very last house, under the circumstances in which he could have wished to find him thus domesticated.

"Strange enough," said the dandy, "talking of the Louvre, nobody knows anything about how it came to be; some fellow kept horses and hounds there, but that's a deuce of a long time ago. It's a capital lounge now."

And here, one word as to the Louvre, which the Napoleonite French will persist in telling one was "built" by Bonaparte. Every body knows, except those who are instructed by these odd French gentlemen, that Louis XIV., having resolved to complete the palace, first employed his chief architect Levaü; but Colbert took a prejudice against his plans and invited all the architects of Paris to send in designs: they were accordingly sent in and exhibited, but only one of them satisfied the connoisseurs to whom they were submitted, and that was from the pencil of a physician, Claude Perrault. However, even that did not meet the expectations either of Colbert or his master; and the King himself wrote an autograph letter inviting Bernini to Paris, which letter was despatched on the 11th of April, 1665.

The offers that were made him, and the honours which were done him in his progress to Paris, are inconceivable. Servants from the royal kitchen were sent forward to prepare his meals, and when he came near Paris, M. de Chambray, Lord of Chantelou, steward of the household, was despatched to receive him.

Bernini reached Paris about the end of May, 1665; his hotel was furnished with the "meubles de la Couronne," and the royal servants were appointed to wait upon him. Nevertheless his design for the façade of the Louvre was not admired. However, the King patronized the architect, and laid the first stone on the 17th of October, 1665. A gold medal by Warin, worth 2400 francs, was deposited in the stone, having on one side the head of the King, and on the reverse, the design of Bernini, with the words, "Majestati et aeternitati imperii Gallici sacrum."

* As the winter approached, Bernini solicited permission to return to Italy—the King gave him 3000 louis-d'ors, and a pension of 12,000 livres for himself and 1200 for his son.

As soon as Bernini was gone, Perrault addressed a memorial to Colbert, stating his objections to Bernini's design, the result of which was the adoption by Colbert of Perrault's. As a piece of architecture, it is certainly unworthy of high commendation. Nothing but its vast size—its length being five hundred and twenty feet—gives it any great claim to notice; but what does besides give it a claim to notice here, is the inscription which Bonaparte caused to be put upon it, and which inscription used to be held and insisted upon by the admirers of that great general as the proof that *he*—the said general *built* the Louvre.

The fact is, that under the imperial tyranny, the tympanum

of the pediment, which had not been before finished, was adorned with a bas-relief by Lemot. Upon a pedestal was a bust of Bonaparte, on the right was the figure of Minerva, on the left that of the Muse of History, who appeared to be writing on the pedestal these words, "*Napoléon le Grand a achevé le Louvre*"; which, as far as the fact goes, might be applied to every journeyman bricklayer who plasters on the last chimney-pot to a gentleman's house. This display of silly vanity, however, was got rid of in 1815, when the bust of Bonaparte gave way to that of Louis XIV.; and for the bit of empty brag in the way of inscription, were substituted the words "*Ludovico Magno*".

These hasty details connected with the royal palace were given by Amersham, not half so much with the view of disabusing his friend's mind respecting the claims of Bonaparte to merits which he ought never to have been allowed, as in his anxiety to prevent a pause in the conversation, just at a point which he was conscious must be delicate and important if—and he could scarcely doubt it—his visitor, George Grindle, really had some *liaison* in the French capital.

There can be no question that our hero himself was exceedingly relieved by the historical and chronological turn the conversation had taken; and he was still more pleased when the summons to the drawing-room came; for the very name of Miles Blackmore, considering all the circumstances, was "a word of fear," as Shakspere says, to the profligate, who was, as it were, running a race against time, to get rid of a victim who was sincerely devoted to him.

While this conversation was going on, much more was doing as regards the progress of our little history.

"It is useless," said Jane, "perfectly useless, my dear Emma, for me to endeavour to overcome my dislike to this man; it is not alone that I detest the principles which he professes, and feel disgusted at the tone and spirit of his conversation; but now do ask yourself, does he appear to possess any one quality calculated to make the life of a woman to whom he is united, happy? Recollect, Emma, this union is for life."

"I admit," said Mrs. Amersham, "that the prepossession in his favour *does* wear off; but still—"

"Oh, my dear friend," interrupted Jane, "do not qualify,—do not make allowances. You know how anxious I am implicitly to obey my father's wishes, and how I dread his malediction for my disobedience. But let what may happen, I cannot consent to be this man's wife."

"Well," said Mrs. Amersham, "there is one thing greatly in your favour in the progress of the affair: for to see you with him, no one could possibly fancy that you ever had the slightest intention of doing any such thing; so that you never can be charged with encouraging his attentions."

"What, then?" said Jane, "With a mind and feelings like

his, he is either unconscious of the indifference, or which is worse, resolved to act upon my father's express determination, without caring whether I like him or not. No, Emma, no; I cannot give up so. It is a dreadful struggle between duty and inclination; but if I had any doubt on the subject before, the experience of the last few hours would have settled the question."

"But then, my dear girl," said Mrs. Amersham, "what course do you mean to pursue? He is not only your accepted, but affianced lover, and is to marry you in a few days—the affair is complete, and it was under those circumstances we asked him here."

"Yes," interrupted Jane, "I am fully aware of the extraordinary position in which I am placed, but—"

"If," said Mrs. Amersham, "this unconquerable dislike had established itself, you really ought, my dear girl, to have made our resistance to the marriage at an earlier stage. I know nothing to advise as it is—"

"I think," said Jane, "if I could get to town, I might, perhaps, see my way clearer."

Here came into her mind the counsel of Smylar—the real management of which she did not comprehend, but to which she clung with a hope of extrication from her difficulty.

"Who have you to confide in there, Jane?" said Mrs. Amersham, quite satisfied that if she committed herself to Smylar her doom was assuredly sealed.

"Who?" said Jane; "anything, Emma, is better than the prospect before me; surely even *you* would conspire—if it must be so called—to save me."

Now this was the first direct attack upon an application to Emma, and she felt proportionably flurried. Here Jane was confided to her care by her father—hither her intended husband had been invited—and here her future father-in-law and his other son were expected.

"My dear girl," said Emma, "indeed you ought not to trifle with this matter. If you really and truly feel so strong a repugnance to the marriage, you ought to make up your mind to express it. You are not only acting unfairly by this Mr. Grindle, but by yourself: it is absolutely necessary that you should come to a determination and express it."

"But, dearest Emma," said Jane, "every arrangement is made, all the settlements are prepared, and if it had not been for the death of Mr. Leeson, I should before this have been his wife. My father would kill me if I now resisted, or, worse than killing me, would curse me. What am I to do—what can I do?"

"Now, Jane," said Mrs. Amersham, "before I take any steps in this matter—and what steps to take, I at this moment do not in the slightest degree understand—tell me honestly and fairly,

as you have always hitherto told me everything, is it that another attachment growing upon you has rendered your disinclination to this marriage?"

Jane's answer was a flood of tears; she threw her arms round Emma's neck, and thus practically confirmed her belief that Frank Grindle had made himself master of her heart; and he was expected at the Amershams' on his return from France with his father.

This it was that seemed to have hastened the crisis of her fate—this, added perhaps to her conviction that the story told by Lady Crainly, relative to George Grindle, was true, and that her father's history of the affair was an evasion. She longed to get to town—she longed to talk to Smylar, who evidently knew all the particulars of the case; and so agitated was she after the dialogue with Emma, that when the men came to the drawing-room she was missing. She had been forced to bed by a dreadful headache.

It had now become so evident to Mrs. Amersham that something desperate would infallibly arise out of the experiment of this marriage, that her anxiety for news from Miles Blackmore was most painfully increased. Not that she saw why, even if such a connexion had existed between George Grindle and any frail fair one, that should—being dissolved and put an end to—interfere with his union with Jane. Still she had that reliance upon Miles Blackmore's honour and firmness of purpose, that she thought if he once applied himself to the subject, they should know so much better how to act, always observing, as Amersham did, and endeavoured to impress upon his wife's mind, that they had nothing whatever in the world to do with the affair.

While all these things were going on in England, and while Colonel Bruff was making himself a very considerable donkey at Lady Gramm's, Sir George Grindle had caught his son Frank at Paris—hit him like a good shot at Meurice's, and without in the slightest degree enlightening him as to the object of his paternal and unexpected visit, resolved never to leave him till he got him safe back in England—satisfied that a *dénouement* touching Nelly, would upset the whole concern. To get him away from Paris was Sir George's first object, and to keep him constantly with him while he was there the next: in pursuance of which scheme he trotted him about to see sights, and of course amongst others the gallery of the Louvre.

In this gallery, as they passed through it, was a tall fine-looking man assiduously employed in copying a matchless picture by Téniers. Next to him was a delicate creature, with whom he appeared to be acquainted, also at work; at her side was a lady, who proved to be her mother, and at her feet was crouched a beautiful child, who, although close to his young mother's feet, seemed to be exceedingly fond of his mother's friend, the tall fine-looking man.

The tall fine-looking man had the day before received a letter from a friend in England, relative to circumstances connected with the handsome girl and her lovely boy who were near him. He proposed accompanying them that afternoon to Versailles, in order to obtain some information which his friend in England required: he knew a good deal of the history of these people already, but not enough to answer his present purpose.

As he was working upon his copy, Sir George Grindle and his second son Frank passed by—and passed by without noticing his fair neighbour. Trifling as this incident seems, it was a very important event in the little history which he was studying. He said to the lady next him,

“Don’t you know those people?”

“I never saw them before,” said the lady, proceeding with her work.

This struck the questioner forcibly, and fully determined him or availing himself of his growing or rather grown acquaintance with them, to proceed, as it had before been his intention, to Versailles.

The reader of course needs not to be told that the fine-looking amateur was Mr. Miles Blackmore—that the ladies were Nelly and mother, Mrs. Eversfield, and the beautiful boy was our poor Tincy; it being the *last* day he was out before his illness.

The difficulty which Miles Blackmore felt in ascertaining the real state of the case as concerned George Grindle and Nelly may easily be conceived. In Paris—in Versailles—as Lady Cramly for once in her life had truly said, she was only as Mrs. Grindle. Miles Blackmore, who had, as we know, first accidentally and since casually seen and met them, had some doubts as to the regularity of the connexion before he received Amersham’s letter; and those doubts were confirmed into certainties when he saw Sir George Grindle, whom he knew (as everybody in London did) by sight, pass his *soi-disant* daughter-in-law without recognising her, while she, *per contra* as the accountants say, denied any knowledge of him.

What could it all mean? so amiable a creature, so kind, so affectionate, and such an exemplary mother! having too a most exemplary mother herself—generally received, and universally respected in a most respectable circle. Miles Blackmore was not a man to be beaten in such a case as this; he soon made up his mind to ascertain all the facts, and less for the gratification of satisfying his friends the Amershams, than for the sake of doing justice, he resolved to set about such an inquiry as should result satisfactorily to somebody—whom he cared not, so that the truth should be established, and the right maintained.

It was just five days after Sir George’s visit to the Louvre, that he and Frank reached Amersham’s. George’s pressing invitation—very well gotten up—was of course to be immediately attended to; whereupon the baronet and his second son pro-

ceeded post-haste to join the family party, and arrived in the evening of the third day.

It may seem to some people that George Grindle, who, as one imagines, must have been aware of Jane's coldness towards him, exhibited a considerable want of generalship in bringing his brother in immediate contact with *her* and contrast with himself. But they who entertain this opinion have not yet acquired a competent knowledge of George Grindle's character: he feared no rival—he dreaded no comparison, and least of all with his half-brother, whom he considered rather as a foil to the diamond than otherwise—at least in the society of women.

Sir George was quite charmed with the place, and very much pleased with the Amershams; but, in the course of the first evening of his lodgment there, the gentle, timid manner of Jane Bruff to Frank struck him particularly; and when they began to sing duets, and Mrs. Amersham accompanied them, and then Frank betook himself to a long black flute, all over silver flaps, and poured forth some exquisite music, he could scarcely refrain from giving George a hint to try and drive away the intruder. But no—George was engaged in a corner with Danbury at *écarté*,—having, as has already been hinted, a facility of king-finding at the bottom of the pack, which had been remarked upon more than once in other places.

After the music, came a discussion about drawings; and when Frank, with the best judgment and without the slightest presumption, gave his opinions, his opinions were all seconded by Mrs. Amersham; and what was worse, when Jane, exceedingly pleased, not only by the intellectuality of his conversation, but by his manner, and the evidence of good taste and good feeling which pervaded all he said, cast her eyes towards her charming friend Emma, she saw in the reciprocated look an according *flat* of approbation; and yet these very people were nourishing and cherishing in their house the other brother as the affianced husband of the girl, whose marriage was to take place in ten days or a fortnight!

However, they are settled for the present, and there they must remain, while we cast our eyes over the gallant and odious colonel, whose campaign against the heart of Lady Gramm is causing much misery and irritation in the bosom of the oily-curled heroine of Bullock's-smithy.

It was not likely that whatever underhand machinations this plague in petticoats might be contriving, she would be for an hour without intelligence from the Amershams. The rational over-education of Miss Harris rendered her quite capable of forwarding despatches regularly, and the arrival of Mr. Frank Grindle there could not fail to afford subject for their correspondence. But still Smylar was unarmed till she got Jane to town; that was her object—that was her game; and, as we have already seen, Jane had fallen, or very nearly fallen, into her snare. It

was upon this great scheme of Smylar's that all depended. What was to save the poor girl we yet do not know; the trap was set and baited, and the recent defection of the colonel from the rouge and ringlets made the case considerably more desperate.

Taking these circumstances in conjunction with the unsettlement of Jane's mind—supposing it ever to have been settled—produced by the appearance of Frank in the domestic circle at Amersham's, and which, as nobody—except perhaps Mr. George Grindle himself—could doubt, would produce results the most disadvantageous to the intended bridegroom, Smylar began to rejoice in the midst of her anger and jealousy at the prospect which presented itself. Judge then what must have been her exultation when, on the evening of the very day on which she received the intelligence of the location of the baronet and his younger son exactly where she wished them to be, she found the colonel, having dined at home, disinclined to leave his house, and desirous of some conversation with her after the manner of the olden time.

How the woman's ears tingled when Mr. Rumfit announced that the colonel wished to speak to her! how her bad heart beat as she hastened to the room in which he had been dining! Her plot had succeeded—her scheme for making a quarrel between him and Lady Gramm had turned out well—she felt assured of it, and as upon *that* depended all, she could scarcely control the motion of her limbs as she paced the passages to reach his presence.

"Smylar," said the colonel, as she entered the room, "sit down, Smylar. I wanted to talk to you about getting ready for Jane's wedding. Time goes on, and I suppose their grief for Mr. Leeson wears off; and I had a letter from Jane to-day, who writes in better spirits than usual; and so I was thinking about what we had best do in making arrangements here for the—what do the French call breakfast?"

"*Déjeuner*," said Smylar.

"That'll do," said the colonel, "that's it. I have forgotten my French, and my English too, almost."

"I thought, colonel," said Mrs. Smylar, "that you intended Lady Gramm to be the—"

"There, that'll do," interrupted the colonel; "I know nothing of Lady Gramm. She is a conceited old doll; and her friend Miss Pheezle and her infernal verses are as bad. No, no, we can do without Lady Gramm; you can manage all—everything."

"But," said Smylar, with a face into which the most beautiful expression of ingenuousness was thrown, "have you and her ladyship quarrelled, colonel?"

"That affair is settled," said the colonel. "Some good-natured friend of hers and mine—most probably that Miss Pheezle herself—wrote to her to tell her that I wanted her jointure to make up for what I was to give Jane; and so she flew into a rage,

and asked me whether I supposed she ever would marry me, even if I asked her; and so in short our acquaintance is at an end."

"Somebody wrote?" said Smylar, innocently. "What, was it an anonymous letter, colonel?"

"Yes," said the colonel. "Infernally anonymous. Nothing could be worse, as she represented it. But there's an end. It was the woman's own fault. She was always throwing out hints about the loneliness of widows, and all that, and Miss Pheczle used to write poetry about it. However, that'll do—only don't let me hear the woman's name again—that's all."

"Well," said Smylar, "it only shows how very strangely things turn out in this world. From the moment I first saw Lady Gramm I made up my mind that she would come to be mistress of this house, and thought what a comfort it would be to you when Miss Jane was gone to have such a companion."

"Ah," said Bruff, filling his fair friend a bumper of claret, "I want no companion like my Lady Gramm. I shall cut down my establishment, and, as I told you before, take a smaller house and live snug—eh, Smylar?—here's your health, old woman. Yes, you know all my ways; my little oddities, what I call my crinkums and my crankums; you can manage for me."

"Why, colonel," said Smylar, "as far as I am able I shall always be too happy to do what I can to keep things straight and comfortable; but then Lady Gramm would have taken charge of the establishment in so different a manner."

"May be so," said the colonel; "who knows? What! Here, draw your chair this way—have another glass of wine. The devil take Lady Gramm—there's nothing like habit—nothing like old friends."

Saying which, the gallant colonel exhibited strong symptoms of being exceedingly affectionate to Mrs. Smylar, which, as being unquestionably conducive to the completion of her great plan, was to that ingenuous lady most particularly acceptable.

"And what," said Smylar, withdrawing herself gracefully from the immediate proximity of the gallant soldier, "what does dear Jane say in her letter to-day? I suppose Mr. George Grindle is there?"

"Yes," said the colonel, somewhat puzzled as to what to add, inasmuch as although Smylar's information respecting Frank's domestication in the house had been premature, the fact was now established. "Yes, Sir George is there and some other people."

"And Mr. Frank?" said Smylar, inquiringly.

"Why," said the colonel, "I believe yes—a snug family party."

"Of which you ought to be one," said Smylar. "Now colonel, don't you blame *me* if things turn out wrong in this house. I have given you warning."

"Yes," said Bruff, "and sent me down on a wildgoose-chase for no purpose."

"I don't know," answered Mrs. Smylar, "whom you may call a wildgoose; but take my suggestion at the worst, I was only wrong in point of time. The amiable and all-accomplished Mr. Francis Grindle, you say, is *now* staying in the same house with Jane."

"Well, and what then?" cried Bruff in a tone of impatience; "Jane is engaged to be married; where is the danger, or impropriety, or anything else, in her associating with her future brother-in-law. No more as I see than with her future father-in-law. Set your wits to work in making preparations for the—the what is it?—the *dîjeuner*—and leave me to settle all the rest. Rely upon it, Smylar, I know what I am about, and if I didn't, Sir George Grindle does."

Had there been a third person present at the scene which has just been described, he might have seen the expression which animated Mrs. Smylar's countenance, when the colonel expressed his opinion of his own intellectual qualities. As far as matters were at this juncture proceeding, her triumph was complete. Everything seemed to work exactly as she wished; and when she went to order the colonel's coffee, she was as well satisfied with herself as ever she was in her life.

On the day following this conversation, Amersham received a letter from Miles Blackmore, in answer to his "delicate question," and it was just such an answer as anybody who had the pleasure of Mr. Miles Blackmore's acquaintance, might have expected. It contained nothing whatever relating to the subject under discussion. It was short, abrupt, and written as Amersham thought, under strong excitement. The main point—indeed the only important point which it contained—was the intelligence that Blackmore intended to be in England in a few days, till which time he would postpone the announcement of whatever intelligence he might be able to procure. Not a name or a fact was to be found in the letter; so that when Emma communicated to Jane the reply which her husband had received, her heart sank within her, doomed as she was to an uncertainty with regard to the vices of the man to whom she was destined to be married.

Time however flies, and matters are drawing to a conclusion. George Grindle, rather *ennuyé* by the "domestic comforts" of Amersham's circle, found it absolutely necessary to run up to town for a couple of days; which he accordingly did, leaving Jane to the unmitigated enjoyment of the society of Frank,—who, feeling the embarrassment of the position in which he was placed, devoted himself to Mrs. Amersham, whose look and manner indicated not only her estimation of his qualities and accomplishments, but her just appreciation of the line of conduct he had adopted.

What Jane thought about it, we cannot pretend to say: but this is certain, that when George took his departure for town, and the wedding-day was positively fixed for that day fortnight, she hated him more than she ever had before.

CHAPTER XX.

THE preparations for the approaching marriage were now proceeding with all that *fussiness* which usually belongs to them, whatever may be the condition of the parties concerned.

A christening, a wedding, and a funeral, are events in which the principals, or their friends, deem it a paramount duty to use every exertion to impress the world, or as much of it as can in any way be brought within their influence, not of the value of such things generally, but of the immense importance of the particular one in which they happen to be interested. We are very much afraid that the religious nature of either of these most sacred, and deeply interesting ceremonies, is scarcely ever considered: the paramount object, from the highest to the lowest, as far as their circumstances will allow, being to neglect nothing essential to give the affair an imposing appearance, and to call in every attainable assistance in making out their pretensions to as much consequence as they can assume. Of these grand epochs in the drama of human life, the second, for exceedingly good and efficient reasons, must always be the one selected by the chief actors for playing their peculiar *rôle* with appropriate effect—they not being in the first allowed even to walk on the scene, and in the last they are still less capable of such exertions, their parts having been played out, and, as far as their performances are concerned, the curtain dropped.

Marriage, therefore, when there is no obstacle to prevent "the happy event" coming off with proper *éclat*, is never allowed to pass without extraordinary exertions being made in the appropriate machinery, dresses, and decorations. The first lady and first gentleman are by universal consent, of which their own seldom fail, to form a prominent part, placed in the position of *stars* in most instances "for that occasion only;" and the whole of the company by whom they are supported seem bound by no common influence to put forth all their energies, that the performance shall afford the utmost satisfaction to their audience, and, what is not often the least important point in their considerations, to themselves. Fashion, usually so despotic, is here tyrannical. The least of her usages are regarded as the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not, neither are they to be evaded in their very slightest particulars. It appears that no wedding can be pronounced respectable wherein the high contracting parties are not scrupulously

exact in observing the customary regulations. The dress, the cards, the cake, the favours, the invitations, the entertainment, and the flight into the Egypt of the honeymoon, receive infinitely more attention than the legal settlements, or the sacred ceremony. In many instances more time is devoted to a consideration of the bride's pocket-handkerchiefs than might have sufficed to instruct her in the nature of the serious responsibilities and obligations she is incurring ; but then it should be remembered that fashions and morals are not judged to be of equal consequence in these matters, and knowing this, of course there can be nothing further to say.

It was far from the wish of the gallant and very disagreeable colonel that the marriage of his daughter should be shorn of the least of the beams which shone around the most brilliant affair of the kind that had been celebrated in the respectable portion of society to which she belonged. Indeed this might be anticipated. Ambition, as we have convincingly shown, lay at the bottom of the obtuso intellect of the military behemoth, when entertaining the idea of uniting his fair and interesting Jane to the eldest son of Sir George Grindle, and scarcely took upon itself a less excusable shape, than the very similar inclination by which Sir Giles Overreach was influenced when endeavouring to dispose of *his* daughter. Whilst this lay at the bottom, a still less excusable desire found a place at the top, wherein the bo-ringletted and spindleganded ex-heroine of Bullock's-smithy, ever since her successful experiment in the anonymous line, seemed the prominent object : of which exaltation she appeared daily becoming more secure. But of this more anon.

He now applied himself, with as much interest as he could take in such things, in superintending, after *his* fashion, the multifarious matters which may be classed under the head of preparations for a wedding on a grand scale. Perhaps at first he had not intended to have taken so active a share in these arrangements, nor, it is equally probable, would he have tolerated the expenditure it must occasion ; but he had, since his fruitless errand to the Americas, felt more kindly disposed towards his excellent and affectionate daughter than he had ever been before, and he readily deceived himself in imagining that the display he was endeavouring to create in honour of the eventful day that gave poor Jane to the amiable ex-lieutenant of dragoons, was for the purpose of gratifying her rather than himself. To these novel duties he was also greatly instigated by the specious Smylar, who, besides discovering that in the liberal orders the several tradesmen received she might obtain very pretty pickings, saw that by encouraging the colonel in busying himself in making as much confusion as possible by his blundering interference, she should keep him from regretting the loss of Lady Gramm's society, and from feeling any inducement to resume the dangerous intimacy she had so cleverly, as she considered, destroyed.

When Colonel Bruff was not at the Doldrum he was pretty sure

to be inspecting and directing, wherever he could bring his heavy undignified person to a halt. By the former he did no very great harm, though he did about as little good; but as he seldom had any clear conception of what he himself intended, it is not to be supposed that the tradesmen honoured with his commands could obtain a more definite one; consequently there is nothing surprising in the fact that his services in this quarter materially delayed the execution of his orders. The most respectful attention was paid to him by the lawyer, coachmaker, silversmith, upholsterer, and their coadjutors; but as it frequently happened that the orders given on the second day were as opposite as possible to those given on the first, and that such as were added on the third day could not by any exercise of skill be made to harmonise with those of the two preceding, the lawyer, coachmaker, silversmith, upholsterer and their coadjutors were exceedingly puzzled what to do. They at last made the very pleasant discovery that all they had done they had done wrong, which never failed to put their highly respectable but very doltish customer in a monstrous ill-humour at *their* blundering and stupidity. According to an old established truism, the longest lane has a turning; but the gallant and disagreeable colonel contrived to lead every one he attempted to direct through a long lane composed of nothing else but turnings. The poor man was always turning either to the right or left, or else was forced to the unsatisfactory course of retracing his steps. However, he ultimately did contrive to finish his task, but never before had so redundant a way of doing it been thought of.

Nevertheless, all this time Bruff was particularly well satisfied with his own proceedings in relation to what was going forward under his auspices. He lamented the delay that had occurred, because he could not help regarding with some uneasiness the connexion his hopeful son-in-law in perspective had formed—of the knowledge of which he had made so unwarrantable a use in the communication he had made to his daughter at the Amershams'; therefore he was more anxious than ever for the accomplishment of his darling project. Of what might occur after the ceremony, he never gave himself a moment's concern. There was no room in his big heart for even the least particle of sympathy for the betrayed and deserted Ellen, whose only fault had been her devotion to the husband he was securing his unfortunate child; there was no consideration for the unhappy consequences which must arise out of such an ill-judged union, of a disposition such as Jane possessed, with a nature so deficient in honourable principle and manly feeling, as that owned by the baronet's favourite son:—he had no cares, he had no thoughts, he had no feelings for anything that went beyond the legality of the marriage which, for reasons that seemed to him good, he had determined on. He had got a resolution fixed in his dull, foggy mind, that Jane Bruff should be Lady Grindle; and come what would, he was decided that Lady Grindle Jane Bruff should be.

His closetings with the manœuvring spider-brusher, who with so little credit to himself was gradually enclosing him in her toils, were becoming more numerous and confidential, and were increasing so in length as to excite the observation not only of the respectable Mr. Rumfit, but of all the servants in the house. Smylar had no friends in the establishment; the over-cunning and over-scheming rarely have anywhere; and although they all feared her, there was more than one amongst them who would gladly seize upon any opportunity that might present itself for opening the eyes of "old Buzfuz" as to her true character. With this object they watched her more narrowly than she imagined. Indeed her attention was so engrossed by one important scheme, in which she entered heart and soul, under the delightful conviction that it was as feasible as it was attractive, that matters now of so little importance in her eyes as the thoughts and proceedings in the servants' hall, totally escaped her. Nothing could appear more triumphant to her than the effects produced on the vain, stupid, selfish feelings of the offended frequenter of Lady Gramm's *sorées* by her fiendish machinations, and often did she congratulate herself on the remarkable tact and talent she had shown in breaking off the connexion. The hints the colonel had given her of his intentions, and the desire he had expressed that she should *manage* for him, were remembered and cherished by her as "confirmation strong" of the existence of that influence over her master's inclinations which she had so long and earnestly been studying to create.

It must not be imagined, that in the eager struggle in which she was now bending all the arts, powers, and capabilities she had acquired during the course of her governess-actress-housekeeper existence, "our Jane," as her master's daughter was now familiarly styled by her, was forgotten. Far from it. That amiable but most unhappy young lady was still a prominent object in her cunning, scheming, calculating, low mind, and in her depraved heart the wish to ruin her had as firm a place as ever. But finding the artful manœuvres she was continually having recourse to, to prejudice the father against his child, failed of producing any effect—that with a dogged obstinacy and dense stupidity, as she considered it, he often very impatiently "that'll do'd" all the suspicious warnings, doubts, feurs, insinuations, and conjectures by which she sought to worry him into sending for her home, that her victim might be brought more securely within the influence of her artifices—she was politic enough to discontinue such useless efforts, and her object seemed to be as much as possible to humour the still somewhat too intractable despot to the top of his fooling, both as regarded the preparations for her young mistress's wedding, and in all those little gallantries the elderly behemoth thought proper to exhibit during their private consultations after dinner, which afforded such a fund of entertainment to the respectable Mr. Rumfit, and such of his colleagues as could be induced to undertake the dangerous achievement of peeping through the keyhole.

"Things are going on bravely, colonel," said the ringleted and rouged Machiavel in petticoats, after she had insinuated herself into her usual station in his immediate neighbourhood, "her custom always of an afternoon" since she had been sent for by her master:—"and we may say with our immortal bard,

" 'Thus far into the bowels of the land—'"

"That'll do—that'll do!" exclaimed that brave and exceedingly discriminating officer, his heavy eyes brightening up at her approach, as much as anything so particularly dull could. "Sit down, old woman. Drawn your chair this way; nearer—that's it. All snug at the doors, eh?"

"Quite so, colonel," replied the star of Bullock's-smithy, affecting as much regard to propriety as would not entirely discourage her occasionally disagreeably affectionate admirer, whilst it proved to him that in her behaviour she was the very model of discreet housekeepers. She however was in an error with regard to the doors; they were not quite so secure as she fancie

"I'm getting those blockheads at last to understand what I want of them," observed old Bruff as he filled a bumper of rum for his companion. "Had I them under my command a reasonable time, I'd drill them into something more like obedience to orders. Military discipline has many resources to quicken a dull comprehension. Here's your health, old woman."

This was said with one of his favourite applications to the patella of the amiable object of his gallantry, which were invariably attended on her part with a graceful drawing back, and a slight expression of reserve, exceedingly proper, and particularly creditable to the *once*, at least, indiscreet ex-governess.

"Thank you, colonel," replied the odious menial, giving her lips the necessary bite to make them assume the freshness she had before found so attractive. "Yes; you military gentlemen do manage with an extraordinary celerity to bend the most stubborn natures to your will. But where us poor women are concerned—" and here the pendant ringlets were agitated with a brief nodding of the head, that could only be compared, in the comprehensiveness of its expression, with the immortal shake of Lord Burleigh, whilst the look with which it was accompanied, as an Irishman would emphatically say, "bate Banagher."

"That'll do—that'll do!" cried Sandy Bruff, in no slight degree gratified by this well-directed piece of flattery. "Yes, we don't stick at trifles—eh, old woman? We know how to carry on the war. Nothing daunts us—nothing stops us. The men are glad to get out of our way, and the women can't help themselves."

"Exactly so, colonel," answered Smylar, after one or two "Don't colonel's"—"You're really *too* bad"—and similar expressions,

with which she received the affectionate pinchings and pokings, and tender pressures on the foot, which that gallant and distinguished officer appended to every sentence he uttered. But innocent familiarities which are frequently had recourse to by elderly gentlemen with a disposition to gallantry, were never likely to be severely checked by the accommodating and calculating Smylar, and at the present moment she was less inclined than usual to receive such attentions with even the affectation of decorousness she invariably maintained.

It could not be supposed that her seductive ringlets had been made so exceedingly redolent of "thine incomparable oil, Macasar," or that her exquisite complexion had been so carefully manufactured, or that she had put on the new, stylish, and youthful dress she had adopted to set off to the best advantage whatever attractiveness there might exist in her fading charms, without some more profitable object in view than was apparent in her ordinary half complying, half resenting mode of receiving her doltish admirer's little sportive evidences of good humour and good will.

This was so far from being the case, that, as all particularly emphatic people say, it was "exactly the reverse." She wriggled herself into the apartment with the express determination of exerting all her powers of fascination, and all the unscrupulous arts which are so readily employed by persons of her class, to make the grand move which was to put the intricate game she had so long been playing, completely into her own hands.

"You must let *me* propose a toast, now, colonel," observed Smylar, looking amazingly happy and sentimental as she raised her brimming glass towards her mouth, and, then added, with the peculiarly audible and impressive intonation once familiar to her when doing a bit of the pathetic on the classic boards of Bullock's-smithy,

"Here's to the health and happiness of our dear Jane, and may her career in this sublunary world be as brilliant as that of her distinguished and excellent parent."

"I say ditto to that, as some fellow said somewhere," exclaimed old Bruff, tossing off a bumper with extreme satisfaction. "Good soul, Smylar—sha'n't forget you. When all's settled, and Jane's fairly married and disposed of out of my way, you shall manage every thing. You know all my little wants and wishes—you understand all my ways. Small house—every thing snug and comfortable—we'll do as we like and care for nobody—eh, old woman?"

"Depend upon it, colonel," observed the vivacious gentlewoman, with a shade of seriousness; "if my own wishes, my own feelings are to set in the direction most congenial to them, you shall have my best attentions, with that entire and disinterested devotion I have ever exercised towards you, since I have had the honour of superintending your establishment."

"Eh, Smylar, what's that?" exclaimed the gallant officer with a puzzled look.

"Heaven knows," continued the Mrs. Colonel Bruff that was to be,—at least, as she had decided,—"that from the moment I entered this house, the welfare of yourself and that of your dear daughter have been the subject of my unceasing consideration, and that I have spared neither pains nor labour to secure her happiness and your comfort."

"That'll do," said the colonel, "know all that—won't neglect you. Another glass, old woman, and then you must go, for I expect Sir George and the bridegroom presently, to talk over matters of business."

Mrs. Smylar did not exactly like the ungallant mode in which her admirer was endeavouring to get rid of the speech she had so carefully studied; but she was not to be easily disconcerted, and with one of her most melting looks she took the replenished glass and emptied it. When, however, Sandy Bruff made the customary demonstration by which he exhibited his inclination for the honours he considered due to his military rank, she rendered them with so evident an attachment to the service, the distinguished and susceptible officer was quite as much surprised as gratified.

"Eh—what—crying, Smylar!" exclaimed he, as he observed his companion immediately afterwards cover her face with her hands, fling herself back in her chair, and commence a battery of convulsive sobs, such as on a susceptible elderly gentleman like the gallant and disagreeable colonel, are certain of doing immense execution, "Why, bless my soul—I—I didn't mean—What *can* be the matter?"

The colonel speedily worked himself into a state of desperate perplexity. Believing she was taken with one of those hysterical fits which seem so completely the peculiar right and property of the sex, he did not like to ring for assistance, as that would betray his housekeeper, whose after-dinner visits were, he thought, not known to the servants; and not being remarkable for his mental resources he was completely bewildered as to what he ought to do to hasten her recovery before any one entered.

The expression of dismay and alarm spread over his features was most ludicrous, whilst he heavily rose from his chair, as a bright idea suddenly presented itself to the cloudy vista of his mind. He forthwith proceeded to fill a tumbler out of a glass water-jug that stood in the centre of the table; but the quick-witted actress heard the gurgling of the liquid as it flowed from one vessel into another, and with a provident care for her artificial curls, and equally artificial complexion, she allowed her hands to drop, her eyes to open, and her lips to sigh forth sundry half audible, yet wonderful eloquent sounds, which plainly enough denoted her return to consciousness.

"I'm very foolish, colonel; I know I am," exclaimed the panting

palpitating fair one, just in time to avert the coming inundation ; "but my feelings ran away with me, and indeed, indeed, I cannot help—"

"That'll do—that'll do!" exclaimed her master, as his too sensitive housekeeper was in the act of squeezing out a very small tear from either eye with a corner of her pocket-handkerchief. "Glad it's no worse—thought you were in a fit, or a faint, or some abominable thing of the sort. But you're better now—eh, old woman? Come—another glass of claret will do you no harm."

"A woman cannot help her feelings, colonel, and they too often make sad work when they do overpower her. I have hitherto managed to keep mine in proper subjection; but when I recalled to mind your gentlemanly kindness and considerateness, the many noble and generous qualities you possess, which it is impossible for any woman to see without admiring, too warmly for her peace, the individual they so eminently distinguish—and when I remembered the urgent and uncontrollable necessity there now is for me to remove myself out of their delightful influence—"

"Eh—what—how's this?" cried Sandy Bruff, again a little at fault. "Remove! Who says remove?—All fudge! You shall stay with me as long as you like, and let me catch anybody daring to find fault with you."

"Ais! it cannot be," exclaimed the pinched-in and pushed-out, lamp-oil and orange-peel heroine, as she diligently continued to nostril the very minute distillation going on at the corners of her eyes. "People *will* talk, and, as I have found to my inexpressible shame and mortification, they *will* also write. Oh! it is very bitter to have to endure the malice and slander of the censorious. But my determination is made. I am unfortunately entirely dependent on the world's good opinion. I have but one course to adopt. Read *that*, colonel, and tell me, I implore you, if I am not right in deciding upon quitting your house, immediately after the marriage of your dear and excellent daughter."

Without saying a word further on the subject—for in truth, the gallant officer was a considerable deal too *posed* to say anything to the purpose—he took the letter, which the wily spider-brusher drew from a woman's ordinary receptacle for her most confidential communications, and proceeded to read it.

Smylar threw herself back in her chair, and again covered her face with her hands, but as she availed herself to the full extent of the accommodation offered by her open fingers, she of course saw the effect made by the perusal of the letter on her exceedingly indignant master—which, by the way, she watched with all the intense eagerness with which a good mouser regards its approaching victim. And she had excellent reason for such eagerness, for on the result of the perusal of this letter all her ambitious hopes depended.

The colonel read, his face the while exhibiting the appearance of an animated prism, which was rendered very much more pictu-,,

resque by the extraordinary variety of expressions that passed over it, arising from the frownings, and twitchings, and contortions that seemed to have seized upon every feature.

"The work of some spiteful old hug—some incarnate devil at mischief," exclaimed the angry officer—we might add quite oracularly. "Just like the one that was written to that old fool, Lad, Gramm. Shouldn't wonder if Miss Phcezle wrote them both, for she possesses just sufficient talent to invent such despicable trash I would I could bring her to a drum-head court-martial—by Jove I'd punish her pretty handsomely."

"Tis too bad," exclaimed his sobbing companion; "I never injured her in thought, word, or deed. A loss of any other kind I could bear; but as your friend Shakspeare says,

"He who filches from me my good name,
Takes from me that which not enricheth him,
And makes me poor indeed."

"That'll do—that'll do!" cried the gallant colonel, approaching her, as it could not be doubted, in one of his most affectionate moods. "Never mind, old woman—you may snap your fingers at Mrs Phcezle and all her breed, seed, and generation. As for you leaving, I won't hear of such nonsense. You'll think better of it by-and-by, I can tell you. It shall be your own fault if everything isn't soon settled as satisfactorily as any woman can desire. Come, hold up your head, and don't be a fool."

"Oh, colonel, my heart is *too* full," exclaimed the delighted manœuvrer, with a look that would have brought down thunder from the gods of Bullock's-smithy; and then she gracefully laid her face on the ample breast of her distinguished admirer, whose arms very readily enfolded her drooping figure.

Shortly after this, these interesting turtle-doves were suddenly startled by a long and loud burst of laughter, in which it was evident more than one voice joined.

The happy pair, as we, I suppose, must call them, were too happy to hear Mr. George Grindle's cab drive up to the door, the noise of which, it is however right to say, they might have failed to distinguish had they been otherwise engaged, as at the same moment a cumbrous Yorkshire waggon was passing the door, each of its six horses creating a little concert of bells, which made every other sound in its vicinity completely inaudible.

The street-door, too, happened to be what, by the world downstairs, is called "a-jar," the respectable Mr. Rumfit, being on the step, conversing confidentially with another distinguished member of the butler's club living next door, who had stationed himself on the top of the adjoining area steps; and Mr. Rumfit, for reasons best known to himself, allowed Sir George Grindle and his son to pass him on their way to the room in which they usually found his master, and before he had closed the door, and could overtake

them to announce their names to the colonel (which he had no intention of doing), they had succeeded in getting unobserved into the apartment, and behold the pretty burlesque on the well-known statue of Cupid and Pysche, the colonel and Mrs. Smylar were then and there creating.

"*Giove omnipotente!*" exclaimed the amiable ex-lieutenant of dragoons, "this is coming it slap, old fellow!"

"Bravo, colonel! Neck and neck this, as they say at Newmarket," added his respectable parent, in very like the same tone and manner.

"Uncommon like it!" continued the other. "But did you ever!—as the girl said. I say, governor, don't this look desperately like the sort of thing they show at the theatres sometimes—something in the *tableau vivant* line? Shouldn't wonder if papa Bruff had offered to play Romeo at one of the great houses, and was rehearsing, with the assistance of this particularly nice Juliet, the most moving scene. Deuced moving, wasn't it?"

"Never saw anything half so perfect in its way," said Sir George.

"That'll do—that'll do!" cried old Bruff, recovering a little from the confusion into which he had been thrown. "Vanish, Smylar! Retreat! Disperse!"

"Never say die, colonel," said the young *roué*, as he attempted to stop the progress of his intended father-in-law's wasp-waisted *cord antique*, as with her hands over her face, and her head drooping before her, she was making the best of her way out of the room. "Accidents will happen in the best regulated families, incomparable and too charming Smylar; don't give yourself the slightest uneasiness. I approve of the colonel's taste; and as for the governor, he's a tramp. We'll be as dumb as fishes, depend on't. By Jove, I don't wonder at the colonel's partiality, and so forth—you are such an uncommon nice—"

"Now I beg—I implore—I entreat! This is so *very* distressing!" exclaimed the lady, in tones exceedingly like the most pitiable confusion, as she contrived to evade her persecutor's attempted hold, and make her escape. As she hurried out of the room, she caught a glance of the respectable Mr. Rumfit enjoying his cachinations by himself in a corner of the hall, whilst certain sounds of a like nature proceeding from the lower flight of stairs, plainly told her that the butler was not the only one in the establishment the recent discovery had amused. Fully convinced it had been the effect of design—in which she exhibited her usual sagacity—she proceeded to her room, bent on the total ruin of "the whole set."

Sandy Bruff, as soon as soon as Smylar effected her exit, got remarkably well *roasted* by the hopeful son and equally hopeful father, with whom he was about to be so closely connected. It was in vain that he "that'll-do'd" either one or the other: Sir George had no had his laugh out at the previous exhibition of the fair.

...keeper's confidential intimacy with her gallant master, to which he had equally unexpectedly been made a witness, and his excellent son and heir appeared as if it was impossible he could make too much of so good a thing. But although the colonel bore it very pleasantly for some time, he at last began to show signs of impatience. Had not the baronet judiciously changed the subject, "the respectable old fogey," as Mr. George Grindle afterwards allowed to his excellent parent, "might have run rusty;" and as putting him into an ill-humour might have considerably affected his chance of obtaining the very handsome share of *the stump*, which was now almost within his grasp, he thought himself much "too wide awake" to suffer his good fortune to slip through his fingers in this manner. Accordingly, immediately he received the hint from his cautious father, he discontinued all allusion to the affair, and went into so many and various revelations of similar adventures of his own, that he managed to put both his companions on their mettle, and story followed story from the worthy trio, each of which rivalled the other in the sort of credit they conferred upon the narrator.

After a good deal of time passed in *such* pleasure, business was thought of, and as they were by this time in the best humour with each other, there was the less chance of any difference arising amongst them. The arrangements were found perfectly satisfactory; old Bruff had behaved very liberally, and neither Sir George nor his son was likely to make the slightest objection to anything which promised to be so much to their advantage. The evening ended with a quiet game at whist, the member of Crockford's at his own particular request, taking "dummy," and by dint of his extraordinary good luck in always holding honours, and when it came to his deal, winning every bet on the turn-up card,—possibly by being gifted with that peculiar foresight some players possess—he managed to pass the time very profitably.

Still, in justice to this very amiable and interesting personage, we are bound to say that in his proceedings against his father that was, and father-in-law that was to be, he exhibited the most strict impartiality. He did not obtain his winnings from one, without exerting the same remarkable skill and facility which procured for him the money of the other. It is time, however, to leave our accomplished ex-lieutenant, to see what is going on all this while at the Amershams'.

While her promised husband was thus advantageously passing time, Jane Bruff was living in a state of the most intense excitement and disquietude. Mr. Francis Grindle was behaving towards her in a way that secured him the highest opinion of her best friends. Mr. and Mrs. Amersham made comparisons could not have been otherwise than exceedingly odious to any of Class B: and in the esteem of both, his despised half-was daily making the most rapid advances. But although he filled his heart with every proper and honourable feeling

which could be drawn from a due consideration of the near relationship which would so soon exist between him and the amiable and beautiful girl with whom he was domesticated, he could not avoid seeing the sad effects created by the deep anxiety with which she looked upon her approaching union. He, too, well knew that she was doomed. He had had too complete an insight into the disposition and habits of the irresistible lady-killer, not to be aware of the dreadful nature of the fate of such a woman as Jane Bruff, when placed in the unenviable situation of his wife. He could no more help his admiration of her many excellences, than he could avoid giving the deepest and fullest sympathy for the misery which too evidently she was experiencing. Consequently, although his outward conduct towards her was as like that of a brother-in-law as even old Bruff could have desired, his most secret feelings were hourly getting more of a nature, which were, he could not deny, quite incompatible with that relationship. He began to experience a distress of mind and heart of the most painful character. To have fled from the place would, he considered, be heartlessly abandoning the fair victim to her fate: and to stay and see out the sacrifice was, he, thought, a task scarcely endurable.

The "two days" George Grindle passed in town, which were prolonged to nearly a week by certain remarkably ingenious excuses on his part, were passed by Jane Bruff in such suffering, as none but a nature like hers, on the verge of a precipice such as threatened to annihilate her happiness, can imagine. More than ever she longed for the counsel of the wily Smylar: but a sort of indistinct hope that the mystery existing in the singular communication of Miles Blackmore, would afford her the means of escaping the fate which grew more terrible every time she reflected upon it, in conjunction with an insurmountable dislike to beginning a clandestine correspondence with her father's housekeeper, induced her to keep her inclinations to herself. And well was it for her she did so!

Francis Grindle was apparently *only* attentive, considerate, and respectful: but when she listened to his conversation with her friends, which always exhibited such undeniable signs of a noble nature, and a mind stored with intelligence, how could she avoid increasing the great distaste she had acquired for the coarse, trifling, and vulgar small-talk of his odious half-brother? and could she help noticing the sterling graces, both moral and physical, which in Francis made up the character of a perfect gentleman, and comparing them with the lacquer which was so disagreeably visible in the ex-lieutenant's particularly Brummagem manners? The more she disliked the one, the more she admired the other; and in proportion to her admiration, increased her sense of misery at the prospect of losing all that was most conducive to her happiness, and of obtaining, instead, a combination of evils from which nothing but constant and hopeless misery could arise.

She suffered deeply—she suffered in silence, as she thought; for a girl of Jane's education possessed the highest sense of moral

rectitude, which made her a most watchful guardian over her feelings. But her looks declared her wretchedness, and with an eloquence that language could not have rivalled. Both she and Francis did all that human nature could, to conceal from each other the mutual sympathy they felt. But this benefited neither. To keep up appearances, they endeavoured to go on in the old friendly way ; they sang and played together, and occasionally, though not so often, indulged in their customary walks and drives whenever they could do so with a third or fourth party : but there seemed now to be meanings in their favourite songs and duets they had never before noticed, which they found it impossible to pass without being strangely and deeply moved ; and their rambles, though fruitful in thought and feeling to an extent previously unknown, passed without the slightest appearance of that outward communion of sentiment which once made them so delightful. Watchful as they both were, however, they both betrayed themselves.

On one occasion, they were singing Jackson's lovely duet, " Love in thine eyes for ever plays," which they had often gone through together without finding anything in the words or music to create any remark ; but they had scarcely reached the line,

"How different is my fate from thine,"

when they seemed mutually to discover that they had got on forbidden ground; and that they were making known the feelings they were most anxious to conceal. Each voice suddenly grew tremulous and uncertain, and the time all at once became much slower. The words which followed,

"No outward mark of love is mine:
My brow is clouded by despair,
And grief, love's bitter foe, is there."

were sung, or rather murmured, in a state of the most painful embarrassment. Francis Grindle would have given all he was worth in the world to have found some excuse for turning over the leaves and breaking off what he was singing ; and if his fair companion had not been sitting to the piano, she must have fallen into a swoon. As it was, she first experienced a tightness at the throat that nearly took away all power of utterance—her heart beat with a most distressing rapidity, and every thing began to swim before her eyes. Though she mechanically continued the performance, she felt that in another moment she must lose all consciousness of the surrounding scene. Fortunately, the attention of her friend Emma was attracted by the unusual feebleness and tremulousness apparent in the voices of the singers. She saw at a glance the peculiar nature of the case. With a woman's ready tact, and with an equally feminine delicacy, she aroused them both to sense of their position, and

managed to make them sing the duet to the end. But that was the last of such performances. Indeed, they not only did not sing together again, but avoided as much as possible all similar employments.

The next day Mr. George made his appearance. If before, he was too well satisfied of his own ability as a lady-killer to heed the presence of his younger brother, he now appeared to experience a much greater degree of security and self-satisfaction. He could not see the dislike, amounting almost to abhorrence, with which he was regarded by his intended wife. By this time, however, she stood not alone in this respect. The *roué* did not seem to think it worth while to take the pains he had done in his former visit to make himself agreeable; and Mr. and Mrs. Amersham, who had become warmly attached to Francis, found their former prepossessions changing fast into the most unqualified disapprobation. The situation of poor dear Jane was much and earnestly canvassed by them. They had both hoped that Miles Blackmore would ere this have procured such information relative to the lady at Versailles, as would have put an end to this disagreeable marriage; but several days had passed without their again hearing from him, and although they had the firmest reliance on his effective intervention, and were fully impressed with the notion that he had something very important to disclose, they could not help regarding the very short period now remaining before Jane's fate must be decided for good or evil, with intense anxiety. Emma counselled her friend wisely, as she had always done; and had it not been for such advice, poor Jane Bruff would inevitably have fallen into the meshes the two-legged spider in her father's house had so elaborately constructed.

In due time the colonel's summons arrived. All the necessary preparations had been completed, and Jane must immediately return to town with her friends, her wedding being settled to take place in three days. And now comes what the Frenchman called the commencement of the end.

CHAPTER XXI.

CONCLUSION.

To the excited and miserable Jane, time seemed to be passing with something like miraculous rapidity. The more she saw of her intended husband, the more strongly grew her detestation of his manners, his person, and his principles; and in the proportion that he sank in her estimation, rose his amiable, gentlemanlike, and accomplished relative. As the hated marriage was

now fearfully near, each of the brothers arrived at the point beyond which there appeared to be no possibility of getting. The lady-killer was regarded by her with a mingled feeling of contempt and disgust, by no means flattering to the self-love of that exceedingly vain and selfish individual; whilst the noble characteristics of "the saint," as Francis was sometimes styled in derision by his two nearest relations, were so often and so admirably considered, as materially to interfere with the reflections which Jane Bruff ought to have given to the important duties she would so soon be called upon to fulfil. She was looking more pale and anxious every day that brought her nearer to the fate she dreaded even to contemplate. Hope seemed to have deserted her. The continued silence of Miles Blackmore threw a gloom over her young heart, which even her apparently still sanguine friend Enuma failed entirely to remove.

Notwithstanding appearances, both Mr. and Mrs. Amersham were very much disappointed by the unaccountable inattention of their friend, after raising their expectations so high as he had done by the peculiar nature of his last communication. In these frequent private discussions of Jane's situation, misgivings would intrude. Both by this time were fully satisfied that her union with Mr. George Grindle did not hold out any great prospect of happiness, and both had sufficient reasons of their own for believing that with Mr. Francis Grindle her lot would be an enviable one. Although they could not have more completely agreed than they did in their desire to see their dear Jane the wife of the younger brother, in preference to the elder, they were both as fully convinced of the impropriety, indeed impossibility, of their doing anything in opposition to the wishes of her parent. They were now under his roof, and it wanted but three days to the day fixed for the wedding. Deeply interested as they were in whatever concerned Jane's welfare, and convinced as they might be that there was but a remote chance of its preservation in the forthcoming marriage, they, under the circumstances, had no excuse for any open interference, and could not be justified in having recourse to a clandestine encouragement of her disinclination to the husband provided for her. The only thing that could be done, their anxiety urged them to do no time about; and a very pressing letter was written to Miles Blackmore, stating the exact time fixed for the wedding, and all attendant particulars, and imploring him, if it was in his power to do anything that would put an end to Mr. George Grindle's pretensions to the hand of their mutual friend, to set about it instantly, or it would be too late.

The state of mind in which Francis Grindle had existed during the last few days, may, as we are inclined to think some one has said before, be more easily imagined than described. His high sense of honour still held sufficient control over the deep sympathy and admiration with which he could not help regarding

the affianced wife of his brother, to keep such a check over his feelings as sufficed to prevent any outward manifestation of them ; but in spite of principle, philosophy, religion, and every other aid such a nature as his was sure of employing on such an occasion, the struggle between inclination and duty became every day more painful. He appeared overpowered by some extraordinary influence that held him chained to the spot, an agonized spectator of the sufferings of the only woman he had ever met with who fulfilled his exalted conception of the feminine character, and he was but too well satisfied the fate with which she was threatened was a horrible one. He knew that he could do nothing in her favour ; and whatever might be the nature of the sentiments she had inspired in him, with a modesty natural to such a disposition, he could not convince himself that her regard for him was anything more than what society would readily sanction under the circumstances. His own agitation during the performance of the duet described in the last chapter, rendered him blind to hers ; but had he been satisfied that she preferred him to the amiable ex-lieutenant of dragoons as much as she did, anything like endeavouring to supplant his brother in her affections, seemed to him so discreditable, that he could not have been brought to take advantage at such a time of her partiality. There appeared to remain, for him, nothing but a "patient resignation to circumstances, and an ardent hope, that her married life might be as different as possible from the gloomy picture of it he had drawn. And thus he went on from day to day, and from hour to hour, doing his best to assume nothing beyond a brotherly interest towards her, and to disguise the intense anxiety with which he contemplated the brief period which had to elapse before her fate would be sealed.

As "the consummation so devoutly to be wished" of Mr. George Grindle's marriage to the heiress approached, that accomplished gentleman, and remarkably fine specimen of the dandy belonging to Class B, experienced an increasing degree of uneasiness. His heart, hard as it was, was not so thoroughly callous, as to be totally indifferent to the misery he was about to inflict upon the devoted Ellen and his unoffending child ; and with "the compunctions visitings" he endured when he contemplated this contingency, there came a sense of insecurity, which was still more unpleasant. Ellen had always been a most regular correspondent ; how she contrived to write so much and so frequently was a mystery to him ; but the fulness of a loving woman's heart was far beyond the reach of his very narrow philosophy. To his great surprise he had not heard from her since he replied to her strong but vain appeal to his feelings as a father. At any other time he would have been glad enough to have been relieved from the bore, as he considered it, of perusing her exceedingly affectionate letters ; but he had a dread of Mr. Miles Blackmore enlightening her on many subjects of which he.

was so very desirous of her remaining ignorant till Jane Bruff became Mrs. George Grindle, and, what was of much more consequence to him, he had got possession of the liberal supply of "the stumpy" he was to obtain with her, he had such excellent and pressing reasons for requiring. He tried hard to satisfy himself that Nelly had taken his refusal to hasten over to see his sick child so much to heart, she could not bring herself to write again; he even would have found consolation in the conviction that poor Tiney was much worse, and the attentive mother in too distressed a state to write again; but the conversation he had had at the Amershams' with Mr. Danbury and his host, recurred to him with a most painful accuracy of recollection, and all his fears, doubts, and conjectures settled upon Miles Blackmore.

However uncomfortable might have been the state in which the wretched Jane or the equally unhappy Francis Grindle passed the brief interval before the approaching marriage, it was exceeded in the case of the individual for whose advantage it had been thought of. A consciousness of guilt—of such guilt as there could be no extenuating—of conduct, mean, dastardly, and cruel, alike unworthy of a man and a gentleman, and a fear of exposure, haunted him to such an extent as to deprive him, in a great measure, of his ordinary assurance, and make his conduct appear so singular as to attract the notice and increase the suspicions of the Amershams. He drank, as though to drown reflection, and was evidently suffering under great excitement. His face was very pale, his gaze both gloomy and restless; and though he made frequent attempts to shake off the apprehensions that oppressed him, and assume his customary free and easy style, they were, as he emphatically would have styled them, "decidedly no go."

Sandy Bruff was the only one of the party who appeared perfectly at his ease; indeed, he was much more agreeable in his manner than he had ever been known to be; a sure sign that he enjoyed a state of unusual satisfaction. All was progressing in the manner he wished; he met with no opposition; the preparations were at last satisfactorily concluded, and he had scarcely anything to do beyond anticipating the agreeable life he was henceforth to lead, under the management of the incomparable Smylar. Mrs. Amersham's lady-like manners had made a favourable impression upon him, which for reasons of her own she was exceedingly desirous to improve, and he had consulted her on various matters connected with the approaching ceremony—much to the annoyance of his wasp-waisted and wasp-natured housekeeper, who looked with a deep and bitter jealousy on any intimacy approaching confidence with any one besides herself, and she soon began to task her engineering to destroy it as effectually as she had done in the case of Lady Gramm.

The many excellent qualities of Amersham also were far better appreciated than they had ever been by his host, who really seemed to strive to make himself agreeable; and in the after-dinner conversations he had with his friends at his own table, he found a sort of light breaking in upon the dense fog that had so long enveloped his mind, from coming in close contact with natures so enlightened and gentlemanlike as those of Amersham and Francis Grindle, and much to his own surprise he listened to them with respect, and did his possible to appear worthy of their estimation.

When "our dear Jane" returned to her father's house, the indefatigable Smylar exclaimed, in the convenient privacy of her own apartment, and in a style that would have thrown the dramatic critics of Bullock's-smithy into ecstasies, "Now comes the tug of war!" and she determined to put forth all her powers to make the struggle she saw must ensue, as advantageous as possible to herself. One glance at the destined victim, without any assistance from Miss Harris, was sufficient to disclose to her the exact state of the case. But notwithstanding that young person had become the object of her fellow-servant's especial hatred, the latter condescended to exert herself more than she had ever done, to make her believe she was her most devoted friend; and with this, and the assistance of the curaçoa, she did her best to obtain from her all the information she thought necessary for her purpose. Harris, although she had been put upon her guard, was as communicative as could have been desired, and Smylar listened attentively and smiled exultingly. That Jane Bruff would escape if she could, from a marriage evidently so detestable to her, our Machiavelli in petticoats was perfectly satisfied. That she *should* escape she was determined. Her flight she had already planned, and had contrived all the various manœuvres that were to alienate her father's heart from her, and obtain the fortune Mr. George Grindle had promised himself.

The only apparent obstacle to the success of her schemes was Mrs. Amersham. Although Smylar behaved with extreme caution before her, to appear in her eyes nothing more than a confidential domestic—although she assumed a modest and respectful demeanour, and studied the part of the respectable housekeeper with more attention than she had ever done before—for some inexplicable reason or another she never could feel at her ease in that lady's presence. In vain she appeared devoted to her young mistress—in vain she tried her most irresistible powers of pleasing her friend—she felt satisfied that Mrs. Amersham saw through all her artifices, and she was afraid would counteract them. In fact, Emma entered the house with any thing but a favourable opinion of that consummate piece of cunning, and possessed penetration enough to suspect her objects before she had been an inmate of it four-and-twenty hours. The wily Smylar therefore found almost all her efforts to pour the poison

of her tongue into the ear of the unhappy Jane unavailing, through the constant watchfulness of Mrs. Amersham.

Once only had she been so fortunate as to find her alone, in spite of a great deal of clever plotting and planning for that purpose, and she had scarcely had time to urge her miserable victim, with all the serpent and the fox mingled in her nature, to take the only step that could free her from the fate impending over her, when she was interrupted by the watchful Emma, whose suspicions were immediately awakened by the state of excitement in which she found her young friend; and not long after the tempter had left the room, and placed her ear at the key-hole, she learned enough to justify her in taking a decisive step to put a stop to that odious menial's mischievous influence.

Nor was Smylar altogether idle with the gallant and recently not quite so much as usual the disagreeable colonel. Her after-dinner colloquies, it is true, were at an end, but she contrived to find other, and as she fancied better opportunities for her confidential communications. At what period of the day or night these occurred, we have no other means of ascertaining than might be gathered from a slight creaking in the colonel's door, followed a few minutes afterwards by a similar noise in her own, notwithstanding a careful oiling of the hinges by the incomparable she herself—that was heard every morning, at least an hour before any of the servants were expected to be stirring. Whether after the customary "tucking up" she thought proper to return to her master's chamber, to be the more certain that she had neglected nothing necessary to his comfort during the night, as possibly she felt bound to do by virtue (?) of her office, we have no evidence beyond the very curious coincidence just mentioned. But we are quite certain she *did* find occasions to endeavour to fill his mind with doubts of the Amershams, and with suspicions of his daughter, and we are equally well assured that, to her extreme mortification, she failed of producing anything like the effect she desired. Whether he was too well satisfied with the parties she was *hinting* against, or was too sleepy to attend to her insinuations, or not disposed to conversation, or had swallowed too much wine to understand what she meant—she invariably found all her talent set at nought by an impatient "that'll do," or the commencement of a nasal obligato accompaniment to her voice, with the duration and power of which she was too familiar to hope to effect anything for that night.

Baffled in all her-deep laid schemes, yet of too enterprising a spirit to allow her prey to escape, the artful and unprincipled schemer made preparations for one grand effort. But while she is hatching *her* plot, we must lose no time in endeavouring to complete ours. We have already said sufficient to prove that the housekeeper was in any thing but *good* odour with the rest of the establishment, and since the return of Harris there had been

such revelations in the servants' hall, that the ringleted and spindle-shanked favourite of the worthy colonel could not but be looked upon as "the common enemy." By means which will be explained presently, an insight had been obtained into her unprincipled manœuvring, which in any other family, when made known, ought to have procured her instant dismissal; but they all well knew their master's partiality, and considered that any attempt to "bell the cat" would be attended with both danger and difficulty. Nevertheless it was resolved that the attempt should be made, and the very morning of the marriage was the time fixed on for this hazardous experiment to "come off."

The colonel was in one of his happiest humours, seated in his dressing-room, in full fig for the ceremony, attended only by his excellent butler the respectable Mr. Rumfit, to whom he was giving various directions, and hearing various small matters of intelligence which that gallant officer never objected to when in his amiable moods. After sundry preliminary hemps and haws, Rumfit cleverly led the conversation to Lady Gramm, and having intimated that he had heard of an anonymous letter having been sent to her ladyship, stated that he had discovered "quite promiscuously" a clue to the writer. The subject was rather a ticklish one, but the colonel was in the right mood, and desired to know the particulars, with the full intention, if he could obtain the ocular proof of Miss Pheezle's delinquency, to reward her handsomely for her interference. Upon this encouragement Mr. Rumfit further stated, that as he was approaching the house of an old fellow-servant of his, now in business as a greengrocer in the neighbourhood of the Regent's-park, who also officiated as a post-master, he recognised a female whom he well knew, enter the shop, which she almost immediately afterwards left. He had the curiosity to inquire of his old acquaintance what that person who had just left him wanted, and ascertained she had merely called to post a letter, and had then the further curiosity to look at the letter, and observed that it was directed to Lady Gramm; and he did not put it down till he had examined it so narrowly that he should know it again in an instant, by certain marks which he detailed. Upon the butler giving his description, the colonel unlocked a drawer and carefully examined a letter it contained:

"That'll do, Rumfit," exclaimed his master, indignantly tossing back the document, "the same to a T. I got possession of the infernal thing, intending to return it to the old fool who gave it me, if I failed in discovering the writer; and now she shall have it, with my compliments to her precious friend and toady by whom it was concocted—for the individual you saw was of course Miss Pheezle?"

"I beg your pardon, colonel, she was no such person," replied the butler, with an exceedingly grave and mysterious countenance.

"Eh, what? not Miss Pheezle?" exclaimed the gallant officer, looking strangely bewildered, "who the deuce was she, then?"

The butler looked to the door significantly, approached his master closely, and with a glance such as he would have fixed upon any one caught in the act of purloining a portion of the family plate, replied, "Mrs. Smylar."

At this announcement the worthy colonel appeared (as it was afterwards picturesquely stated in the servants' hall) "took all of a heap." The dying dolphin could not have exhibited a greater variety of colours than for a few minutes his face displayed. He was so astonished and confounded as to be unable even to utter his customary "that'll do;" and before he could recover from his confusion, Mr. Rumfit produced a paper for his perusal, and stated that Smylar having been observed by one of the servants, at about the same period as the posting of the letter, tearing up a piece of paper very carefully, and throwing the fragments out of window, all the pieces having fallen in the back-yard, they were, from "motives of curiosity," carefully collected, and after considerable trouble, pasted together again, piece by piece, on a page of writing-paper. The colonel, without saying a word, began to examine the recovered fragments, and had the pleasure of reading, in Smylar's handwriting, an exact copy, or more accurately speaking, an exact original, of the identical anonymous letter which had caused his rupture with Lady Gramm. Even in his foggy mind there remained now no doubt of the offender; nor was he long in conjecturing the author of a similar production which had apparently given so much uneasiness to his amiable and devoted housekeeper; and though slowly, there very clearly dawned upon his understanding a pretty accurate conception of the particular motives for which they had been written.

Sandy Bruff, though very wrathfully inclined, felt a little, indeed something more than a little, uneasiness. Clear as was the case against the offending party, certain prudential motives restrained him from entering into a quarrel with her. But while the best portion of his seven senses were sunk into a remarkably unpleasant reverie, he was roused by a message brought by Harris, that Mrs. Amersham desired a few minutes' conversation with him in the back drawing-room. He prepared to obey the summons, feeling, as he drew his ponderous form along, exactly like a schoolboy, who, having devoured the sweets he had dishonestly obtained, begins to see, too distinctly to be pleasant, the coming horsewhipping that is to punish him for his roguery.

Whilst our distinguished field-officer was being enlightened as to the character of his unprincipled favourite, his miserable daughter was in her dressing-room, chewing the end, not of sweet, but of very bitter fancies. Harris had finished her labours in decorating the unwilling bride, and had left her a few minutes to her own reflections, to seek Mrs. Amersham—partly for a pur-

pose of her young mistress's—partly for a purpose of her own. Nothing had been heard of or from Miles Blackmore, and the poor girl had given herself up to despair. She sat in her bridal garments, a woeful mockery of the part she was about to play—her hands open upon her lap, and her eyes fixed in a deep and tearful stare upon the floor. From this unnatural stupor she was disturbed by a friendly exclamation, in a kind voice, close to her, and raising slowly her heavy eyes, she recognised, and not without a visible thrill of pleasure, her father's incomparable housekeeper. Smylar knew the time for action had arrived, had planned everything with her usual art, and had determined on making the best use of the occasion. The state in which she found her unhappy mistress, one might suppose would have turned the hardest heart from so dark a purpose as hers; but the odious and heartless wretch saw in it only the best prospect of access to her abominable designs, and in the delight with which she was recognised, beheld a sure sign that the time for her interposition had been admirably chosen.

"Bless my heart, my dear Miss Jane, why positively your hand is as cold as a stone!" exclaimed the wretch, as she, with every appearance of affectionate interest, took up in her own hard palms one of the small, ladylike hands of her victim, "and your countenance is really dreadful—

'Just such a face, so wan, so woe-begone,
Drew Priam's curtains in the dead of night.'"

The poor unhappy girl smiled faintly at the dramatic reminiscence of her companion, but replied only with a heavy sigh.

"Ah! 'tis as I expected it would be!" cried the lady of the ringlets, with a mournful shake of the head. "This odious marriage has become more hateful to you, the nearer it approaches. Nor could it be otherwise. Little as you know of Mr. George Grindle, you must have seen enough to render the very idea of him as a husband intolerable. But I, who have been, as I may say, behind the scenes, have become acquainted with facts regarding him, which ought to render his very name inexpressibly offensive to a delicate female. There cannot be a doubt that your existence, passed with such a man, must be a life of misery, such as no language could do justice to."

"I am afraid my prospect is not an enviable one," observed Jane Bruff, sorrowfully.

"And what a different being is Mr. Francis!" exclaimed the tempter, with a tone and look of pleasing exultation. At the mention of his name, Jane slightly blushed, and the languid beating of her heart grew quicker and stronger. But she said nothing. Smylar was too intent upon her prey not to have noticed the effect she had produced.

"He is indeed a noble specimen of a man! The very soul of

honour—the perfection of what is gentlemanlike—at once the *beau-ideal* of a husband and a lover."

Smylar here seemed bent on excelling herself; but the superfine phrases she had spoken with an affectation of such sublime enthusiasm, were not her own—they were borrowed from a romance, the high-flown language of which she had delighted to study when she was devoting her affections to the respectable young hair-dresser, mentioned in an early chapter of this work.

Jane sighed heavily. She thought for a moment how perfect might have been her happiness had she been allowed to select a husband for herself, who felt for her the proper degree of regard; but a sense of the uselessness of such thoughts quickly presented itself to her mind.

"Had it ever been my good fortune to have been loved by so superior a being as Francis Grindle," added her companion, with an upward gaze full of a sort of spiritual ecstasy, "I should have felt bound by every law, human and divine, to have left undone nothing a grateful woman could do with propriety to secure his happiness. But when I behold him as I have, a man so thoroughly deserving an honourable affection, being a victim to a passion that is evidently preying upon his vitals, whilst you have his fate in your hands, refrain from making the slightest effort to save him, I have no hesitation in saying, I cannot understand such conduct. That he loves you with an intensity of soul it is the lot of few, even among the most fortunate of women, to inspire, cannot be doubted for a single moment."

Here poor Jane began perceptibly to tremble, and her looks plainly expressed the excitement under which she was listening to the "leporous distilment" that was being poured into her ears.

"You are cruel both to yourself and to him—nay, positively inhuman," continued Smylar, intent on following up her advantage as rapidly as possible, for she knew well enough that her time was limited, and that the opportunity of which she had so cleverly availed herself, if lost, could not recur again. "You are about to commit a suicide on your own happiness, which must at the same time be a murder on the happiness of one whose existence ought to be dearer to you than your own."

"Forbear, Smylar, I implore you!" exclaimed the agitated girl. "He has given me no reason to believe he regarded me in any other character than as a sister."

"I know to the contrary," replied the other emphatically. "I know that he worships you as man rarely worships woman—he feels as none but a Francis Grindle could feel towards the woman who is honoured with so proud a gift as *his* affections."

"He has said not a word to me on the subject—and even if he had I cannot—"

"Yes you can—you ought—you *must*. Every true womanly

feeling in your breast calls upon you to take the necessary steps to save him from the agony in which you are most undeservedly plunging him, by your utter disregard of yourself and him."

The poor girl mournfully shook her head; her heart was too full for utterance, and she seemed impressed with the idea that it was now too late to make any effort to set aside the marriage.

"Rely upon me, my dear Miss Jane," said the specious persevering hypocrite. "Believe me, I feel for you most sincerely. As a woman, I cannot stand by, a quiet spectator of the miserable sacrifice so soon to take place. I have done what few in my dependent situation would have dared to do; but then I have looked on you almost with the love of a sister, and would willingly save you at any hazard." Seeing that her destined victim merely looked at her inquiringly, she continued in a more urgent manner,—"You must ask no questions; the moments are precious, and will not admit of being wasted in useless and unnecessary inquiries. With the sanction and knowledge of one who is in a state of agony scarcely to be imagined, I have devised a plan for your immediate escape from the horrible fate with which you are threatened."

"Has he indeed a knowledge of such a plan? Does he desire me to avail myself of it?" inquired Jane, in a hesitating manner, which sounded in the ears of the unscrupulous menial, who was seeking so earnestly to betray her young mistress to her ruin, as the prelude to a complete victory.

Smyler met the inquiring look unflinchingly, and with admirable assurance, replied,

"He implored me to succour you from an evil he regards as worse than a thousand deaths, and prayed me to urge you to fly while flight was possible. Nothing can be so easy as your escape. I have taken care that every one in the house shall be so employed at this moment, that you may be sure of reaching the house-door unobserved, which I will open myself and close for you. Turn to the right, and at the corner of the next street you will find a post-chaise and four fleet horses. The postillions have orders to drive you to some highly respectable friends of mine who live quite retired, a little way in the country, and with whom you will be perfectly safe, till your marriage with Mr. Francis Grindle can be satisfactorily brought about. Put on this large cloak and any of your ordinary bonnets, and your dress will escape observation. While you are on the road to happiness, you may be sure of my best exertions with the colonel to make your peace with him, and after the first burst of his fury is over, I am quite certain there will be no difficulty at all in making him reasonable. Come—let us not lose the precious time."

"No, it cannot be," said Jane, avoiding the proffered cloak

her officious *friend* was about to place over her shoulders ; my father has set his heart upon this marriage. I cannot, I dare not disobey him."

" Foolish girl !" cried the other impatiently. " Your father has no heart in the matter. He consults only his own ease and ambition. He neither cares for your feelings nor your inclinations ; why should you trouble yourself about his ?"

" He is my father," said her young mistress.

" He is your tyrant, you should say," replied her companion ; " and you without a struggle will allow yourself to be the victim of his senseless despotism. Before I would sacrifice myself for such an unnatural, selfish, obstinate old fool—"

" That'll do—that'll do ! " here unexpectedly exclaimed a voice that seemed to freeze the very blood in the now incautious housekeeper's veins, and looking up, even her daring spirit quailed beneath the fury of the colonel's gaze, as, accompanied by Mrs. Amersham, he approached through a closet that opened into Jane's apartment, and might be entered from another chamber which the Amershams had as their sitting-room.

Emma hastened to her young friend, and whispered something which seemed in some measure to have reassured her, taken as she was so completely by surprise, by the method Mrs. Amersham had employed to open the colonel's eyes as to the proceedings of the cunning, scheming, calculating Smylar, directly she knew the latter had obtained access to Jane's chamber.

The colonel was under some restraint doubtless, from the presence of his daughter and her friend, or his rage would have exploded on the head of the detected manœuvrer more violently than it did ; but it was quite sufficiently powerful to satisfy its object that her reign was over ; and great as she was in resources, she saw that there was no remedy but to beat a retreat as quickly as she could. Old Bruff left the room without saying a word to Jane, perhaps from his mind being completely filled with the treachery of his despicable favourite—perhaps from his not having anything at hand particularly worth saying.

A few hours afterwards a small crowd of idlers were standing on the pavement, staring at a bridal party leaving their carriages to enter the church of St. George's, Hanover-square. The party consisted of the Fathers and Sons of this eventful history, Jane and her bridesmaids, two young ladies of her acquaintance, who looked the characters they represented as prettily as they dressed them ; and Mr. and Mrs. Amersham. It is doubtful whether so singular a group ever before entered those doors for a similar purpose. Had not their object been so conspicuous, it was easy for any stranger to imagine that nothing was so distant from their ideas as a wedding. With the exception of the bridesmaids, who evidently thought they were bound in duty to infuse all the happiness they could into their charming features,

they seemed in as much distress as though about to follow some much loved relative to an early grave.

Sir George had attempted a little in the facetious mood, but when he found he did not raise a smile in either of his companions, he desisted—the sooner perhaps from not being without anxiety himself.

Sandy Bruff looked considerably more doltish than usual, and very much out of temper. To tell the exact truth, he did not now care half so much about completing this marriage as he had done the day before. The dismissal of Smylar had completely destroyed the pleasant arrangements he had for the last few weeks considered with such peculiar satisfaction; and, deprived of his convenient housekeeper and amiable daughter also, he could not see how he should be enabled to exist with any prospect of comfort. However ambitious he might have been of seeing Jane "my lady," he never anticipated purchasing that distinction at the price of any pleasure he had been in the habit of enjoying. He was very well aware he could not now creditably put a stop to the affair; nevertheless there is very good reason for believing he would have done so if he could.

No one could look less like a bridegroom than the estimable individual selected to play that enviable part on the present occasion. He seemed to have a settled conviction in his mind, to use his own peculiar phraseology, that there was a "a screw loose" somewhere; and he also began to entertain a vague suspicion that his connexion with the devoted Nelly could not be so easily destroyed as he had at first imagined. He felt exceedingly uncomfortable, and had it not been for peculiarly pressing reasons, in the shape of a very large family of *daughters*, he would, even at that late hour, have gladly "cut the whole concern." When placed in a pew till the clergyman made his appearance, he took the opportunity of whispering to his worthy parent, with his usual disregard of time and place, "I say, governor, I never felt so uncommon queer; this sort of thing don't suit my book at all, and if it wasn't for the uncomfortably particular necessity of the case, I'd bolt off the course."

"The governor" did not seem to think it necessary to reply.

Francis Grindle and Jane Bruff felt all the endurance under suffering, of martyrs tied to the stake. These brief minutes appeared to have compressed into them such an intensity of feverish uneasiness as brought on a total insensibility to every thing going on around them.

Mr. and Mrs. Amersham seemed to take less interest in the proceedings than might have been expected from them. Whether they had given up all idea of Miles Blackmore's agency being now available, or whether they rested with more confidence than before on his successful interposition, there were no means of judging; but they certainly wore an air of composure

that under the circumstances could not but be regarded as surprising.

Increasing anxiety however manifested itself in the features of both when the bride and bridegroom approached the altar, and the marriage ceremony had commenced. They were evidently most painfully disappointed—they exchanged looks which in each expressed equal dismay and astonishment. Poor Jane then was doomed! Her fate was sealed! She was henceforth to be the companion of a *roué* of the most selfish class. Their hearts sank within them when they heard the clergyman's voice asking, "Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife?" but to their great relief, before the question was concluded, they heard quick footsteps approaching, and in a moment they beheld the long-expected Miles Blackmore in earnest discourse with the reverend gentleman. He was distinctly heard to say "You will, I am sure, sir, readily excuse this interruption, when you learn it is for the purpose of preventing a most iniquitous transaction. The person you are about joining in marriage with this lady has a wife living. I have the necessary witnesses at hand to prove her right to that title."

The clergyman appeared both indignant and surprised, and the clerk of course, as in duty bound, still more so. Jane had fainted, and was in the affectionate arms of her friend Emma, with Francis watching over her. The colonel looked somewhat confused, and wished himself anywhere but where he was; and the bridesmaids, poor things, shrank from the unwelcome intruder as though they were of opinion he had done a very discreditable thing, in disturbing the interesting ceremony at so interesting a moment. At last, by the direction of the clergyman, the party adjourned to the vestry, with the exception of the baronet and his eldest son, who found it most agreeable to them to leave the church as quickly as they could, and this in the confusion of the moment they succeeded in doing without attracting attention. In the vestry they found, already assembled, Nelly in deep mourning, and evidently in as deep affliction, with Mrs. Eversfield and her younger daughter and two or three strangers; and such an examination of the affair was gone into as satisfied the clergyman that a second marriage was out of the question, and convinced the colonel he had escaped a rather disreputable connexion.

It appeared that the amiable ex-lieutenant of dragoons had in the course of his wanderings formed a slight acquaintance with Miss Hastings, the Nelly of our narrative, the orphan daughter of a Major Hastings, of the East India Company's service, who on returning on leave of absence from India, where her mother had fallen a sacrifice to the climate, had found a second mother for his young and beautiful girls, but had scarcely become aware of her many admirable qualities, when he began to show signs of

a constitution broken by hard service in the burning East, and after a rapid illness sank into the grave. The second Mrs. Hastings, though she was exceedingly fond of the charge committed to her, discovered a year or two after her widowhood that she would be better able to forward their interests by marrying a pious clergyman, with an excellent income, named Eversfield. He was very kind to the children, and took care that their education should be worthy of their family; but he died suddenly of apoplexy at Versailles, where he had lately taken a residence, and Mrs. Eversfield once more found herself the sole guardian of her dear major's two charming girls. Now, however, she was in a condition, by living economically, to furnish them with the due proportion of accomplishments, and make arrangements for their welfare should she, like poor dear Eversfield, be called suddenly away.

This excellent woman was staying with her step-daughters at an obscure watering-place in the north of England, where she had been residing for a few weeks for the benefit of the health of the young people and herself, when Mr. George Grindle, who was shooting pheasants in the neighbourhood, found them out, and renewed the slight acquaintance he had formed with them a year before at Versailles. He was, as the phrase is, so "struck" with the beauty of Ellen, a fair young creature, scarcely seventeen, as all at once very much to neglect his friend's capital preserves, and very much to attach himself to Mrs. Eversfield's pretty little cottage. At this period the dandy of Class B was a different sort of person in his manners and principles to what he became at the commencement of this tale. We will not say he was perfect even then, but he exhibited nothing of the coarseness of feeling, and badness of moral principle, which he shows so prominently in some passages of this work. He was remarkably respectful to the still goodlooking mother-in-law, and earnest in his devotion to the lovely, and, too soon for her peace, loving Nelly.

Now Mrs. Eversfield, like a prudent woman, made certain inquiries respecting her rather dashing acquaintance, and finding he was the eldest son of a baronet, she felt assured he must be the honourable man he appeared, and congratulated herself on having procured so good a husband for the orphan daughter of her dear major: George Grindle was therefore allowed to do almost as he pleased at the cottage, which permission, to do him justice, we must say was superfluous.

George had already contrived to make himself at home, not only in the cottage, but in the heart of the lovely girl, who was its greatest ornament. He put forth all his seductions as a lady-killer; and over the young and artless mind with which he so constantly associated, they were but too successful. We cannot describe all the arts that were employed to influence the

feelings of a loving and trusting heart; but they must have met with little opposition; for one fine morning, neither Mr. George Grindle or Miss Hastings were to be found. A hurried letter of a few lines, blotted with tears, written by the fair fugitive, stating that she was sure to be happy, and praying for her mother's forgiveness and blessing, was discovered on her dressing-table. Mrs. Eversfield did not despair; she felt satisfied that the eldest son of a baronet of long-standing could not act like a villain, and waited with patience and hope, for further intelligence.

The ardent lover found no difficulty in persuading the companion of his flight to allow herself to be called and considered his wife till the ceremony could be properly performed. His immediate destination was the nearest port, and fortunately for her it was a Scottish one; and at the inn at which they stayed till they could embark for France, the youthful and innocent appearance of Mrs. Grindle, as she was called, attracted the attention of the landlady, a shrewd but motherly dame, and she resolved to save her from the ruin with which she was threatened. By assuming before the gentleman doubts of the propriety of his connexion with "the young lassie" who accompanied him, and expressing no slight indignation that the respectability of her house should be endangered by their coming there, she got him to assure her before witnesses, that the lady was his wife, which he did with a monstrous affectation of indignation at this having been doubted. Mrs. McFillpot made all sorts of apologies; nevertheless, she lost no time in getting, with the assistance of a worthy baillie of her acquaintance, the proper depositions to prove Nelly's legal right to the title the ineffectual *roué* had publicly allowed, and when she presented them to her, gave her a world of good advice as to their value, and the use she was to make of them when necessary. The poor girl was very grateful, and cried very much; but as her amiable lord and "husband" was absent, engaging a passage in a vessel that was to sail next morning for the French coast, and afterwards looked in at a billiard-room where he lingered several hours, he remained profoundly ignorant of the little plot that had been so cleverly hatched against him. The papers were placed at the bottom of one of her trunks, where they remained undisturbed and almost forgotten.

Mr. George Grindle was however a little surprised that Nelly never made any complaint of his taking no steps to fulfil his promise of making her his wife, even after he had been residing in France several months, and when Mrs. Eversfield returned to Versailles, he was also astonished at the readiness with which his affectionate companion agreed to tell her (whose confidence in the baronet's son was unbounded) that they *had been* married. But he readily attributed her yielding to his wishes in these respects, to the depth and intensity of her love for him, and took

no further notice of it than to compliment her in his way, for being "a regular trump and no mistake."

All this time Nelly never entertained the slightest suspicion that the ex-lieutenant was not the phoenix she imaged him to be. He had always ready so many specious reasons for keeping his connexion with her a secret from his family, and she was so trusting, so loving, and so fearful he should involve himself in the ruin he appeared so much to fear, that she forbore to make the slightest allusion to the subject. After the birth of their child they returned to England, and he placed her in a pleasant residence in the Regent's Park, under an assumed name, which she adopted without a question, where she resided till the heartless scheme was concocted, that sent her, still trusting, still uncomplaining with her lovely child, into banishment at Versailles.

There was an object in Miles Blackmore visiting France, of which the reader has hitherto been kept in ignorance. It was to discover, if possible, the remaining family of his mother's sister, who, to the great scandal of her relations, who immediately discarded her, had made a runaway match with a young officer with whom she had afterwards proceeded to India. We have already very carefully described the manner in which he got acquainted with George Grindle, Nelly, and Tiney; but it was not till he became quite domesticated at Versailles, and particularly enamoured of the younger sister of his interesting travelling acquaintance, that he accidentally heard from Mrs. Eversfield, that these lovely sisters were the only children of his erring aunt. By the will of the late Hester Blackmore, Ellen Hastings, or, in case of her death, any family that might survive her, were entitled to share equally the sum of £10,000, and having traced Major Hastings to France after his return to Europe, Miles Blackmore hoped he might in that country discover his children. He had just completed the necessary inquiries to identify the objects of his search, and obtained the evidence which would secure them their legacies, when he received the letter from the Amershams, requiring him to make inquiries concerning the Mrs. Grindle Lady Cramly had mentioned, and stating the reasons for their wishing him to make them.

This communication came upon him like a thunderbolt. He had entertained some unpleasant misgivings relative to Mr. George Grindle, but from motives of delicacy he had refrained from putting any questions either to Nelly, her sister, or her stepmother. In an earlier page we have represented Miles Blackmore as exhibiting something like a decided interest for Miss Bruff; but there was no affection in this. He entertained a high respect for her, and felt for her no ordinary sympathy, but his feelings were certainly not those of a lover. He regarded the gentle and amiable Ellen with similar sentiments, and whilst

waiting to enlighten her concerning the intentions of the man on whom she had squandered her affections, it was not easy to say which was uppermost in his thoughts, the lady-like and interesting Jane, or the devoted and ill-used Ellen. Unfortunately, at this time occurred poor Tiney's dangerous illness, which, although his doting mother hung over him day and night, and did her utmost to secure him the best medical attendance, terminated fatally in a few days. The excuses his heartless father made to her urgent prayer that he would hasten to see the dear child, Ellen took very much to heart, though she was as far as ever from casting on him the slightest blame; but Tiney's death was a terrible blow.

For several days she was in such a state that, urgent as was the case, Miles Blackmore found it impossible to communicate to her the infamous conduct of the wretch to whom she had been so truly devoted, and she at first so completely required the attention of those around her, that several days elapsed before he could find an opportunity of acquainting Mrs. Eversfield of the startling intelligence conveyed in his friend's letter. That lady was inexpressibly shocked. She had never entertained a moment's doubt as to the reality of Ellen's marriage, and she seemed quite overpowered with a sense of indignation and shame. There was no time to be lost, so that directly poor Nelly was sufficiently convalescent, the dreadful communication was cautiously broken to her. It was with the greatest difficulty she could be made to believe it; it seemed quite impossible her dear George could think of acting so basely towards her; but on her being urged to get herself in readiness to proceed immediately to England, for the purpose of rescuing Miss Bruff from the fate with which she was threatened, and forcing Mr. George Grindle to act honourably towards herself, she remembered the motherly advice she had heard from Mrs. McFillpot, and placed in Miles Blackmore's hands the long-neglected depositions the worthy Scotch-woman had procured for her.

Her kinsman saw at a glance the value of these papers, but to make Ellen's claim as Mrs. Grindl more secure, he lost no time in presenting himself at Mrs. McFillpot's hotel, and with the witnesses of Mr. George Grindle's public acknowledgment of Nelly as his wife, proceeded as fast as post-horses and steam-carriages could carry him to London, where Mrs. Eversfield had arrived. A brief and hurried letter from Scotland had prepared Mr. and Mrs. Amersham for their appearance at St. George's; but, as has been seen, they were very nearly too late.

We have merely to add that Mr. George Grindle thought it prudent to take up his quarters at Boulogne, where he had scarcely been a week when, being discovered by a Russian prince (who was a greater adept in that sleight-of-hand than himself), cultivating his customary good fellowship with kings, he was in-

dignantly denounced as a cheat; a challenge followed, and the next morning he had the honour of receiving a shot in his thorax from Prince Rozkymozky, or rather from a French sharper who assumed that title. Of this wound he very soon afterwards died, regretted by few, but by none so much as by his inconsolable widow, by whom, in spite of his treachery, he was still, with all the unselfish love of woman, very fondly regarded.

The gallant, and, we are obliged to add, still disagreeable colonel, resumed his intimacy with Lady Gramm, and became so frequent an attendant at her *soirées* as to stimulate the muse of Miss Pheezle more strongly than ever, and the tongues of her ladyship's particular friends; and when his amiable daughter was, as the newspaper gentleman^v, led to the hymeneal altar by Mr. Francis Grindle, son... months or so after her first appearance there—to which she was accompanied with a similar object by Mr. Miles Blackmore and the beautiful Georgiana Hastings—it was generally rumoured that he was going to give up the house in Harley-street, for the more convenient one inhabited by Lady Gramm, to which with all its contents he was about to become the lord and master—a rumour that gained confidence when it became known, that the respectable Mr. Rumfit and Miss Harris were on the point of leaving the colonel's establishment, to set up one for themselves in the green-grocery-line at Brompton.

Of the spindly-shanked gentlewoman who has taken so conspicuous a part in these pages, we have only to say, that with the help of a low vagabond of an attorney of her acquaintance, she for some time continued to threaten the colonel with all sorts of pains and penalties; but finding neither slandering nor bullying brought her any advantage, she married a stylish journeyman hairdresser—a profession peculiarly endeared to her by remembrance—to whom she had for some time been under obligation for a variety of little articles for the toilet, which he had very handsomely presented to her, without troubling himself about asking permission of his principal, whose property they were; and with their united *savings* he commenced business and she let lodgings. But not much more than a month after they had become comfortably settled, her husband thought proper to turn her out of doors, having discovered her making herself considerably more agreeable to his highly unexceptionable first floor, than he desired or would allow.

Sir George Grindle was much affected by the death of his favourite son; he grew serious, and began to pay much more attention than he had hitherto done to the conversation of the accomplished Francis. But he had received too powerful a shock to recover from it, and the volatile elderly gentleman quickly sank into the character of a melancholy hypochondriac; and by his death, which occurred in a few years, Colonel Bruff enjoyed

the long-cherished satisfaction of seeing his excellent and affectionate daughter "my lady."

Thus terminates our story; such is the picture—certainly not an overcharged one—of characters who play such important parts in society as our modern "FATHERS AND SONS."

